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BY ALEXANDER DUMAS.

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PREFACE.

In preparing for publication, in an English dress, the following work of one of the most popular French writers of the present day, the Translator has carefully removed from it several of the blemishes of the modern school of literature to which it belongs; levity of expression on serious subjects, indelicacy of language, and a desire to gratify the vulgar appetite for horrible and revolting details. These faults vitiate many productions which are otherwise of value and importance; and which, simply by revision, may be accommodated to English taste and moral feeling, and rendered not only unexceptionable, but interesting and useful. This, it is believed, will be found to be the case with the *Crimes Célèbres* of M. ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

Several of the histories in the collection are founded chiefly on the *Causes Célèbres* of Gayot de Pithaval, that unparalleled storehouse of the romance of real life. M. Dumas, however, has divested them of the formality of the old French lawyer, suppressed or condensed the tedious technical pleadings and details of judicial proceedings, and given rapidity, animation, and dramatic effect to the narrative. At the same time, not only in these stories, but in those which he has derived from other sources, he appears to have been scrupulously accurate with regard to facts; having collated the authorities within his reach, and given every incident according to the most satisfactory evidence which he could obtain by his researches.

CELEBRATED CRIMES.

THE BORGIAS.

CHAPTER I.

On the 8th of April, 1492, in a chamber of the Careggi Palace, situated about a league from Florence, three men were grouped around a bed, upon which a fourth was lying in the agonies of death. The first, seated near his feet, and half concealed by the curtains of gold brocade (as if to hide his tears), was Ermolao Barbaro, the author of the treatises "On Celibacy" and "Studies on Pliny," who being at Rome, as the accredited ambassador of the Florentine Republic, had been raised in the preceding year to the patriarchate of Aquileia by Pope Innocent the Eighth. The second, kneeling and still pressing the hands of the dying man between his own, was Angelo Politiano, the Catullus of the fifteenth century, whose mind was so imbued by the classic spirit of antiquity, that we might almost consider him to have been a poet of the Augustan period. The third, standing near his head, and watching with the deepest grief the coming shadows of death over the face of the sufferer, was the illustrious Pico of Mirandola, who at twenty years of age had offered to reply in twenty-two languages to seven hundred questions to be proposed by twenty of the most learned men of the age, if they could be assembled in Florence.

The object of this solicitude was Lorenzo the Magnificent, who, attacked at the beginning of the year by a violent fever, which was aggravated by the hereditary malady of his family, the gout; and, finding that the drinks of dissolved pearls, which the charlatan Leoni de Spoleto had ordered him to take, as if to regulate his remedies rather by the superfluity of wealth than the urgency of disease, were powerless and vain, and that he must resign the charms of social intercourse—the poets, whose lays had been so long his recreation, and the luxuries of his palaces—had required for the absolution of his sins the presence of the Dominican Jerome Francis Savonarola. Nor was it without some secret dread that he awaited the arrival of this stern and fearful preacher, whose voice shook Florence, and upon whose pardon his hopes of future happiness depended. For Savonarola was one of those men of marble who come, like the statue of the Commander in *Don Juan*, to knock at the gates of the voluptuous, and warn them, amid the riot of their festivals and orgies, that it is nevertheless the hour to direct their thoughts towards heaven. Born at Ferrara, to which his family, one of the most illustrious of Padua, had been invited by the Marquis Nicola d'Este, carried away by his impassioned sensibility, he had fled at twenty-three years of age from his father's house, and had made his religious profession of faith in the cloister of the Dominicans of Florence. There, selected to give lectures in philosophy, the young novice had at first to contend with the defects of a harsh and feeble voice, a defective pronunciation, and the total prostration of physical strength, caused by an excess of discipline. From that period he had devoted himself to the most absolute seclusion; he disappeared amid the recesses of his convent, as if the tomb had closed on his career. Kneeling in constant prayer before a crucifix, excited by his penances and vigils, meditation became ecstasy, and then it was he first felt that secret prophetic impulse which urged him to preach the reformation of the church. But the reformation of Savonarola was more reverential than that of Luther. Unlike the German monk, he was guided not by reason, but enthusiasm; he was not the theologian, but the prophet. Bowing to the authority of the church, he stood erect before the power of the state. Religion and liberty to him were equally sacred; and Lorenzo appeared not less guilty in overthrowing the one than Innocent the Eighth, in dishonouring the other. Consequently, so long as he was Lorenzo the Magnificent, Savonarola had resisted all entreaties to sanction by his presence a power he had regarded as illegitimate; but Lorenzo had summoned him to the bed of death—the man and events wore a changed aspect—the austere preacher yielded, and barefooted and uncovered he obeyed the summons, trusting not only to save the soul of a dying penitent, but to obtain the liberty of the republic. Lorenzo awaited his presence with impatience and anxiety. On the sound of his footstep, the dying man's pale complexion assumed a more cadaverous hue, and raising himself, he signified by a gesture his desire to be alone. His friends obeyed; and scarcely had they retired by one door, than, pale and unmoved, the monk appeared upon the threshold of another. Lorenzo, reading on his brow the impassive inflexibility of a marble statue, breathed a sigh so deep, that it might have seemed his last, and fell back upon his bed. The monk glanced around the room, as if to assure himself that he was alone; then, with a slow, solemn step, he advanced towards the bed. Lorenzo regarded him with terror, and exclaimed, as he stood near him, "Oh, my father! I have greatly sinned." "The mercy of God is infinite," replied the monk; "and I am charged with its divine extension towards thee!" "And think you, then, that God will, indeed, forgive?" said the sufferer, gathering fresh hope from these unexpected words. "Thy sins and thy crimes God will entirely forgive!" replied Savonarola. "He will forgive, as regards thy sins, thy frivolous pleasures, adulterous enjoyments, and obscene festivals; and for thy crimes, God will forgive thee—the reward of two thousand florins to him who should bring thee the heads of Dietisalvi, Nerone Nigi, Angelo Antinori, and of Nicolo Soderini, and of twice that sum to him who should deliver them to you alive. He will forgive thee the death upon the scaffold or the gibbet of the son of Papi Orlandi, Francesco di Brisighella, Bernardo Nardi, Jacopo Frescobaldi, Amoretto Baldovinetti, Pietro Balducci, Bernardo di Baudino, Francesco Frescobaldi, and of more than three hundred others, whose names, less celebrated, were yet not less dear to Florence!" And, as Savonarola slowly pronounced each name, his eye intently fixed upon the dying man, Lorenzo answered by a groan, which proved how accurate was their fearful enumeration. "And think you, father," replied he, the accents of doubt still faltering upon his lips, "that of my sins and crimes God will forgive me all?" "All; but upon three conditions!" "What are they?" "The first is, that you feel an entire faith in the power and mercy of God." "Father," replied Lorenzo, with earnestness, "that faith I feel in the inmost recesses of my heart." "The second," said Savonarola, "is, that you restore the property you have unjustly confiscated and retained!" "And will time be allowed me for this?" "God will grant it thee," answered the monk. Lorenzo closed his eyes for undisturbed reflection; then, after a short silence, "Yes, father, I will do it," he replied. "The third," resumed Savonarola, "is, that you will restore the ancient liberty and independence of the republic!" Lorenzo raised himself, by a convulsive effort, upon his bed; his eyes interrogated every feature of the Dominican, as if he sought to know whether he had not deceived himself—that he had, indeed, heard correctly. Savonarola repeated the same words. "Never, never!" exclaimed Lorenzo, again falling upon his bed, with gestures of denial, "Never!" Without one word of reply, the monk turned to depart. "Father, father!" exclaimed the dying man, "quit me not thus. Have pity on me!" "Have pity upon Florence!" said the monk. "But, father," exclaimed Lorenzo, "Florence is free, Florence is prosperous!" "Florence is enslaved; Florence is poor—poor in genius, in money, and in courage. In genius, because Lorenzo will be succeeded by his son Pietro; in money, because it is by draining the resources of the republic that thou hast maintained the regal state of this family, and thy commercial credit; in courage, because thou hast deprived the recognised magistracy of the authority intrusted to them by the constitution, turning thy fellow-citizens from the paths of military and civil duty, in which, before they were enervated by thy luxury, they had displayed the antique virtues, the bygone greatness of their race; insomuch that when the day shall dawn on Florence, and it is not far off," continued he, his eyes fixed and glowing, as if he read and were the prophet of the future; "when foreign hordes shall descend the mountains, the walls of our cities shall fall at the mere sound of the trumpet, as those of Jericho of old." "And you wish that I should dispossess myself, upon the bed of death, of that power which has been the glory of my life!" exclaimed Lorenzo. "I do not; it is thy God!" coldly replied Savonarola. "Impossible, impossible!" murmured Lorenzo. "Then die as thou hast lived, amid thy courtiers and adulators; and, as they have condemned thy body, so let them sacrifice thy soul!" and with these words the Dominican, unmoved by the cries of the dying Lorenzo, went from the room, with the same unimpassioned features, the same measured step, that had marked his entrance. He seemed a spirit, freed already from the trammels of earth, soaring beyond the interests and passions of the world. At the cry which burst from Lorenzo, as he saw him disappear, Ermolao, Politian, and Mirandola reentered the room, and found their friend grasping convulsively in his hands a rich crucifix, which he had taken from the pillow of his bed. In vain did they seek to reinspire hope. Lorenzo replied to their friendly encouragement only by tears and broken sobs; and, one hour after his interview with Savonarola, with his lips still pressed upon the emblem of the Saviour, he expired in the arms of these three men, of whom the most favoured, although all were young, was not destined to survive him beyond two years. "As his death was the necessary precursor of calamity, Heaven," said Nicolo Machiavelli, "deigned to presage the coming evil by the most undoubted omens: lightning struck the dome of the church of Santa-Reparata, and Roderic Borgia was elected pope."

Towards the close of the fifteenth century, that is to say, at the period when this recital commences, the place of St. Peter at Rome was far from presenting that imposing sight which now bursts upon those who approach it by the place Dei Rusticucci. The basilica of Constantine no longer existed; and that of Michael Angelo, the *chef-d'œuvre* of thirty popes, the labour of three centuries, at the expense of two hundred and sixty millions, was not then erected. The ancient edifice, which had withstood the slow decay of eleven hundred and forty-five years, had towards 1440 fallen into so ruinous a state that Nicholas the Fifth, that tasteful precursor of Julius the Second, and of Leo the Tenth, had pulled it down, as well as the temple of Probus Anicius, and laid, in the space they had occupied, the foundations of a new church to be erected by the architects Rosselini and Baptista Alberti. But upon the death of Nicholas, the Venetian Paul the Second being unable to advance more than five thousand crowns towards the continuance of his predecessor's design, the building, then scarcely raised above ground, was stopped, and thus presented in its formless state an appearance even more saddening than a ruin. For the place itself, it had not, as may be readily understood from the preceding description, either its beautiful colonnade by Bernini; its fountains or Egyptian obelisk, which, according to Pliny, had been erected by Pharaoh Nuncorus, in the city of Heliopolis, and thence brought to Rome by Caligula, who placed it in the circus of Nero, where it stood until 1586. But as the circus was situated upon the very space where the cathedral now arises, and as this obelisk covered, by its base, the groundplan of the present sacristy, it seemed to shoot up like an enormous needle, amid the half-formed columns of the unequally raised walls, and the rough unfinished blocks of stone. To the right arose the Vatican, that splendid tower of Babel, upon which, for a thousand years, all the celebrated architects of the Roman school have exercised their genius; but at this period it had not its richly-decorated chapels, twelve great halls, twenty-two courts, thirty-two staircases, and two thousand chambers; for Sixtus the Fifth, who effected so much in the five years of his papacy, had not yet been enabled to add that extensive building which commands towards the east the court of St. Damasus; but it was yet the old and consecrated palace, hallowed by remembrances of the olden time, in which Charlemagne enjoyed the hospitality of Leo the Third, when he received from him the imperial crown of the west.

On the 9th of August, 1492, it seemed as if the entire population of Rome, from the Gate of the People to the Coliseum, and from the baths of Diocletian to the castle of St. Angelo, had assembled by appointment in the place of St. Peter. For so dense was the multitude, that its pressure filled the streets adjacent, and radiating from one common centre, like the rays of the star, the vast mass was seen ascending the basilica, grouping themselves among the blocks of stones, clinging around the columns, winding along the broken outline of the walls, disappearing at intervals within the different houses, and reappearing at the windows in such a manner that each casement seemed walled up with heads. The eyes of all, from every quarter, were intently fixed upon one part of the Vatican, for the conclave was there assembled; and as Innocent the Eighth had been dead sixteen days the cardinals were proceeding to the election of the new pope. Rome is truly the city of elections. From her foundation to the present day; that is, during the course of about twenty-six centuries, she has constantly elected her kings, consuls, tribunes, emperors, and popes: hence, during the sitting of the conclave, Rome seemed excited by a strange fever, urging all ranks towards the Vatican, or Monte Cavallo, according as the scarlet assembly was held, in the one palace or the other. The election of a new pope is of universal interest to Christendom; as, since from the days of St. Peter to those of Gregory the Sixteenth, the reign of every pope may be averaged at eight years, so according to the character of the elected, is this period one of tranquillity or of disorder, justice or venality, peace or war. And never possibly, from the hour when the first successor of St. Peter ascended the throne of the pontiffs, had so much inquietude been exhibited as that which was now observable among the people. Nor was it without cause, for Innocent the Eighth, who had obtained the honourable title of the Father of his People, arising very probably from the fact of his having increased the number of his subjects by eight sons and as many daughters, had died, as has been stated, after a licentious life, exhausted by a lingering disorder, during the progress of which, if we may rely upon the statement of Stefano Infessura, no less than two hundred and twenty murders had been committed in the streets of Rome. During the temporary suspension of the papal authority, the executive devolves upon the president of the apostolic chamber; but its duties—the coinage of money with his name and arms—the removal of the ring from the finger of the deceased pope—the embalming and other ceremonies, and the interment, after nine days of funeral obsequies, of the body in the niche provisionally appointed, until the death of the succeeding pope should consign it to its final place of rest; these, together with the necessity of closing up the door of the conclave, and the window of the balcony from whence the election is proclaimed, had not permitted a moment's attention to be paid to municipal regulations, so that assassination had remained unchecked, if not encouraged; and the people now loudly demanded the energetic repression of this increasing evil. The eyes of the spectators were therefore, as has been said, fixed upon the Vatican, and particularly upon a chimney from whence the first signal should issue, when suddenly, at the hour when the Ave Maria ushers in the close of day, cries mixed with shouts of laughter arose from the crowd, a discordant murmur of raillery and menace; for, at that moment, a small column of smoke was discerned ascending like a fleecy vapour to the sky. And this announced that Rome was yet without a ruler, the world still deprived of a pontiff; for this smoke was the sign that the ballot lists were burnt, and that the cardinals had not yet decided the election. No sooner was it seen, than the countless crowds, well aware that until the assembly of the cardinals in the morning there was nothing further to expect, retired in hurried throngs, and a jesting humour, as if after the last discharge of fireworks; so that in the place where, but a few minutes before, a nation seemed collected, a few groups only were now idly scattered, composed of those whom curiosity might detain, or of others, who, from residing in the immediate neighbourhood, were less eager to depart. Even these imperceptibly diminished, for at half-past nine the streets of Rome were insecure; and as the hour struck, the hurried step of some casual passer-by was alone occasionally heard, doors were successively closed, the lights in the windows gradually disappeared, until as ten was repeated from the chimes around, except from one window of the Vatican, from whence the lamp still threw its fitful light around, houses, squares, and streets were alike wrapped in darkness.

At this moment, a man, enveloped in a mantle, and whose dimly shadowed form arose against one of the unfinished columns of the basilica, glided slowly and cautiously among the blocks of stone scattered around its foundations, and advanced to the fountain which then formed the centre of the square, on the spot where the obelisk now stands; on reaching which he stopped, and concealed by the obscurity of the night and the deeper shadow of the monument, he glanced furtively around as if to be sure he was unobserved, then drawing his sword, he struck three times upon the pavement, producing at each blow light sparks from its point. This signal, for it was one, was not lost; the lamp in the Vatican was extinguished, and at the same moment a packet was thrown out, which fell at a few paces from him, and, guided by its ringing sound as it reached the pavement, he instantly seized it, in spite of the darkness, and hurried away. He had proceeded thus about halfway down the Borgo Vecchio, when he turned to the right and entered a street, at the other extremity of which was a figure of a Madonna with its lamp; approaching this, he took from his pocket the enclosure he had picked up, which in fact was merely a Roman crown, only that it was hollow and divided, and contained in the interior a letter, which, notwithstanding the risk of being recognised, the stranger instantly read, so great was his anxiety to be acquainted with its contents. It was at the risk of being recognised, because in his eagerness this nocturnal correspondent had thrown back the hood of his mantle, so as entirely to expose his features to the light of the lamp, by which it was easy to discern a handsome youth apparently of about twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, dressed in a violet-coloured doublet, open at the shoulders, and slashed at the elbows, with a cap of the same colour, the long black plume of which waved darkly around him. He stopped, however, but a short time, for hardly had he read the billet he had so mysteriously received, than he replaced it in his silver pocket-book; and readjusting his mantle so as entirely to conceal his figure, he walked on with a rapid step, traversed Borgo San-Spirito, and followed the street Della Lingara to where it opens upon the church Regina Cœli. On reaching this place he knocked thrice quickly at the door of a large house, which was instantly opened; then rapidly ascending the staircase, he entered a room, where two ladies awaited his arrival with the utmost impatience.

On his entrance they both exclaimed together, "Well, well, Francesco, what news?" "Excellent! mother,—excellent! sister," replied the youth, embracing the one, and extending his hand to the other. "My father has gained three votes to day, but he requires yet six to obtain the majority." "And cannot these be purchased?" asked the elder of the two females, while the other, in default of speech, interrogated him by a look. "Yes, yes, mother," replied the youth. "That is precisely the point which my father has well considered. He gives to the Cardinal Orsini his palace at Rome, with his two villas of Monticello and Soriano; to Cardinal Colonna, the abbey of Subiaco; to Cardinal St. Angelo, the bishopric of Porto, with his furniture and wines; to the cardinal of Parma the town of Nepi; the cardinal of Genoa, the church of Santa-Maria-in-via-lata; and to Cardinal Savelli, the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, and the town of Civita Castellana; and as for Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, he is already aware that we sent him two days ago four mules heavily laden with money, and gold and silver plate; and with this supply he has engaged to give five thousand ducats to the cardinal patriarch of Venice." "But what measures shall we adopt to intimate the intentions of Roderic to the others?" "My father has provided for this also, and points out to us an easy way; you know, mother, with what ceremony their dinner is now carried to the cardinals?" "Yes, in a basket, with the coat of arms of the individual for whom the meal is destined."

"My father has bribed the bishop who inspects this, and to-morrow being a flesh day, chickens will be sent to the Cardinals Orsini, Colonna, Savelli, of St. Angelo, of Parma, and of Genoa, each of which will contain a formal donation made by me, in my father's name, of houses, palaces, or churches." "Excellent!" exclaimed his inquirer; "every thing, I am now convinced, will proceed as we could wish." "*And by the grace of God*," replied the youngest with a derisive smile, "our father will be elected pope." "A fortunate event for us," said Francisco. "Oh! and for Christianity," answered his sister, with an expression still more sarcastic.

"Lucretia, Lucretia," said her mother; "you are unworthy of the happiness we expect " "What matters it, if nevertheless it comes; moreover you remember the proverb, 'The Lord blesses the increase of families'—a blessing especially due unto our own; considering that our domestic life has borne such a close resemblance to the patriarchal." As she uttered this, she cast upon her brother a glance of such meaning that even he was abashed; but as the pleasures of his incestuous love were for the moment of less interest, he summoned four servants, and whilst they armed themselves to accompany him, he drew up and signed the six donations, which were on the morrow to be sent to the cardinals; and not wishing to be seen at their abodes, he thought of profiting by the night, and thus delivering the papers unobserved to those who had agreed to convey them at the dinner hour as described. This done, and the servants ready, Francesco departed, leaving his mother and sister to indulge their golden reveries of coming greatness.

Eager and excited as before, the populace thronged, at break of day, to the square before the Vatican, where again, at ten o'clock, the appearance of the smoke, still announcing that no one of the cardinals had obtained the requisite majority of votes, provoked the jeers and murmurs of the crowd. It was, nevertheless, rumoured, that the election was narrowed to the choice of one of three candidates, Roderic Borgia, Julian de la Rovera, and Ascanio Sforza, for the people were ignorant of the fact of the four mules, and the treasures they bore to the lastmentioned cardinal, on account of which he had ceded his votes to his competitor. Amid the agitation that this fresh disappointment had excited, the sound of sacred music was heard, and a procession of monks advanced, headed by the president of the apostolic chamber, who had proceeded from the Ara Cœli to the capitol, visiting the principal Madonnas, and most frequented churches, to obtain the intercession of Heaven for the prompt election of a pope. As soon as the silver crucifix which preceded it was seen, the deepest silence prevailed; the people simultaneously knelt, and an impressive silence succeeded to the noise and tumult which had hitherto prevailed, and which was every moment assuming a more menacing character. Thus many thought this procession had as much of policy as of religion in its design; and that its influence must be as effective upon earth as in heaven. At any rate, had this scheme been projected by the cardinal president, he had not deceived himself as to its effect: the result was as he wished; the procession moved on, the laughter and raillery continued, but the threatening cries of the multitude were heard no more. Thus the day glided away, for at Rome no one works; men are there either cardinals or valets, and live they know not how. The crowd was still, therefore, of the densest, when towards two o'clock another procession, but which enjoyed the privilege of causing as much noise as the other had of imposing silence, traversed in its turn the place of St. Peter,—it was the procession of the cardinals' dinner. The people welcomed its approach by their habitual shouts of laughter; irreverent as they were, they little knew that with this procession, much more efficacious than the last, the pope had entered the Vatican. Day closed as before, expecttation was again defeated; at half-past eight the customary signal of the smoke was seen. But as at the same time a whispered rumour from the Vatican was spread, announcing that in all probability the election would be decided on the morrow, this signal was observed with patience.

Dark and stormy the day broke on the following morning, the 11th of August, 1492; but the crowd was still the same. To the people, indeed, this weather was a blessing, for though they might still suffer from heat, they were secured from the more scorching rays of the sun. Towards nine o'clock a violent storm burst in terrific fury over the Transtevere; but rain, lightning, and thunder, of what consequence were they to a people expecting a new pope? The election had been promised; and it was easy to perceive, that, if the day passed without it, a tumult would certainly ensue. Nine, half-past nine, the minute-hand advanced towards ten, no event occurred to destroy or excite hope; at last the first stroke of ten was heard, the chimney attracted all eyes; slowly the bells tolled the hour, every note falling on the hearts of the people. The last stroke sounded; its vibrations faintly faded on the ear, and a loud shout, echoing from one thousand voices, succeeded to the stillness which had prevailed. *Non v' è fumo;*—there is no smoke—that is to say, We have a pope. The rain fell unregarded, so great was the excitement and the joy of the populace. A stone was detached from a window which had been lately walled up, and on which attention was now centred; a general shout welcomed its descent, by degrees the opening was enlarged, and in a few minutes it was sufficiently wide to enable a man to advance upon the balcony. This was the Cardinal Ascanio Sforza; but as he stepped forth, frightened by the rain and lightning, he hesitated and drew back, and immediately there burst from the multitude around, cries mingled with imprecations and threats that they would demolish the Vatican, and seek themselves the pope. The cardinal, more alarmed by this tempest of human passion, than by the storm which darkened the face of heaven, again advanced, and between the interval of two terrific claps of thunder, amid a silence incomprehensible to those who had witnessed the preceding outburst, he read the following announcement: "I announce to you tidings of great joy; the most eminent and reverend Signor Roderic Lenzuolo Borgia, archbishop of Valentia, cardinal deacon of San-Nicolo-in-Carcere, vice-chancellor of the church, has been elected pope, and has assumed the title of Alexander VI."

This nomination gave the most singular satisfaction. Roderic Borgia, it is true, had the reputation of being a dissolute man, but libertinage had ascended the throne with Sixtus the Fourth and Innocent, so that the anomalous position of a pope with a mistress and five children was by no means new to the Romans. But it was important, that the power of the state should be confided to an energetic mind; and it was still more important for the tranquillity of Rome, that the new pope should inherit rather the sword of St. Paul than the keys of St. Peter. Thus the essential character of the festivals given upon this occasion was far more warlike than religious, and had a greater affinity to the election of a young conqueror to a throne, than the elevation of an old pontiff to the papal chair.

With regard to the new pope, he had no sooner discharged the ceremonial duties, which were consequent upon his elevation, and paid his debts of simony, than from the heights of the Vatican he surveyed the plains of Europe, that vast political chess-board, the movement of whose pieces he hoped to govern according to the inclinations of his genius. It was one of those epochs of exciting interest when every thing fluctuates between the period which is finished and the era which commences. Turkey, Spain, France, and Germany, were successively assuming that weight in the political scale whose influence must so powerfully affect the future interests of the minor states. We will, therefore, with Alexander, cast a rapid glance around, and review their respective position as regarded Italy, the possession of which they alike coveted as a prey.

Constantine Paleologus Dragozes, besieged by 300,000 Turks, after he had in vain appealed to Christendom for support, unwilling to survive the loss of his empire, had been found mingled with the slain near the gate Tophana; and on the 30th of May, 1453, Mahomet the Second had entered Constantinople, where, after a reign which bestowed upon him the surname of Fatile, or the Conqueror, he died leaving two sons, the eldest of whom ascended the throne as Bajazet the Second. But this did not occur with the tranquillity that both his right of primogeniture, and the choice of his father, should have guaranteed. Djem, his younger brother, better known by the name of Zizime, had contested the succession upon the ground that he was in fact Porphyrogenitus, that is to say, born during the reign of Mahomet, whilst Bajazet, prior to that period, could be only considered as the son of a private person. This was chicanery, and of the worst kind; but there, where power is all in all, right and justice of no consideration, it was sufficient to excite war. The two brothers, each commanding a large army, met in conflict in Asia, in 1482. Djem was defeated,' and hotly pursued by his brother, who allowed him no time to rally his broken forces; he was obliged to embark in Cilicia, and to take refuge at Rhodes, where he besought the protection of the Knights of St. John. But they, not daring to extend this protection, conveyed him to France, and guarded him with jealous care in one of their commanderies, in spite of the reclamations of

Caib-Bey, soldan of Egypt, who, having rebelled against Bajazet, desired to legitimize his defection by the presence of the young prince in his army.

A similar demand, to suit the same political purpose, had been successively made by Mathias Corvinus, King of Hungary; by Ferdinand, King of Arragon and Sicily; and by Ferdinand, King of Naples. Bajazet, well aware of the importance of such a rival in the hands of an opponent, had sent ambassadors to Charles VIII., engaging, should he undertake to keep Djem in his custody, not only to pay a considerable pension, but to yield the sovereignty of the Holy Land to France, as soon as Jerusalem should be conquered from the Sultan of Egypt, which offer the king had accepted. But Innocent VIII. had thereupon interposed, and in his turn had claimed Djem, apparently to make the rights of the proscribed a pretext for a crusade against the Turks, but in reality to get possession of the forty thousand ducats promised by Bajazet to one of the European princes, whoever he might be, who would imprison his brother. Charles VIII. not daring to refuse a request advanced by the spiritual head of Christianity, and supported by such sacred motives, had consequently released Djem, under the charge of Grand Master d'Ambussin; who, in consideration of a cardinal's hat, had consented to deliver up his prisoner. Thus this unfortunate youth, the object of so many conflicting interests, had made upon the 13th of March, 1489, his public entry into Rome on horseback, clothed in the magnificent costume of the east, between the Prior of Auvergne, nephew of the Grand Master, and Francis Cibo, son of the pope. From that period he had remained there, and Bajazet, faithful to promises, in the due fulfilment of which he had so much at stake, had regularly paid the annual pension of forty thousand ducats to the sovereign pontiff. Such was the state of Turkey.

Ferdinand and Isabella reigned in Spain, and had already laid the foundation of that vast empire, which twenty-five years later enabled Charles V. to indulge in the proud boast, that the sun never set upon his dominions. These two sovereigns had successively conquered and driven the Moors from Granada, their last retreat, whilst the genius of two men, Bartholomew Diaz and Christopher Columbus, had for their advantage recovered a world lost, and conquered a world unknown. Thus, by the result of their victories in the old and their discoveries in the new world, they had acquired at the Court of Rome an influence unknown to their predecessors. Such was the state of Spain.

In France, Charles VIII. had succeeded, on the 30th of August, 1483, to his father, Louis II., who, by means of the scaffold, had left him a kingdom enslaved, but suited to its political condition, viz., the government of a child under the regency of a woman; a regency, however, which had restrained the pretensions of the princes of the blood royal, terminated the civil wars, and reunited to the crown, what yet remained of the independent fiefs. Charles VIII. at twenty-two years of age, was, if we may rely upon the testimony of La Tremouille, a prince of diminutive stature, but endowed with much greatness of soul: if we may rely upon Comines, an infant scarcely freed from the restraints of childhood, equally destitute of intellect as of means; feeble and self-willed, and surrounded by fools rather than by good councillors: or, finally, if we may trust Guicciardini, who, as an Italian, may be suspected of partial views, an inexperienced youth, excited by an ardent thirst of dominion, the increase of power, and the desire of fame—a desire arising much more from his fickleness and impetuosity than from his consciousness of genius—indolent and averse to all occupation, to which, whenever he was led to direct his attention, he betrayed almost always an equal want of judgment and discernment. It is true he was liberal, but it was a liberality exercised without stint and without discrimination. He was at times inflexibly resolute—this was obstinacy rather than firmness: and what his flatterers called goodness of heart, merited much more the appellation of insensibility and infirmity of purpose. As for his body, it was in singular accordance with his imbecility and want of character. He was of low stature, his head large, neck short and thick, his breast and shoulders broad and high. His limbs were shapeless, long, and slim, and withal his features were ugly, yet capable of dignified and forcible expression; and as every limb was in disproportion, his appearance was monstrous rather than human. Such was the man whom fortune destined for a conqueror; the being for whom Heaven had reserved more glory than he could sustain. So much for the state of France.

The throne of the Empire was occupied by Frederic III., rightly called the Pacific; not only by reason of his having always maintained peace, but through the mere fact that being constantly defeated he had been invariably constrained to receive peace as the lot of the vanquished. The first proof that he had given of this truly philosophic spirit of forbearance was during his journey to Rome, to which he proceeded to be crowned. Traversing the Apennines, he was attacked by brigands, who pillaged and escaped with their booty, unscathed and unpursued. Example is contagious; the impunity of the bandit was the encouragement of the noble; the robbers differed but in rank. Amurath seized upon a part of Hungary; Mathias Corvinus overran the lower Austrian dominions. Frederic was unmoved, and consoled himself for their loss by repeating the maxim. Forgetfulness is the remedy of misfortune. At the period now described, he was, after a reign of fifty-three years, about to betroth his son, Maximilian, to Mary of Burgundy, and to place his son-in-law, Albert of Bavaria, who had claimed possession of the Tyrol, under the ban of the empire. He was, therefore, too much occupied with his family affairs to feel any solicitude about the public interests of Italy. And, moreover, he was engaged in researches for a device for the house of Austria, an occupation of the utmost importance to a being endowed with such faculties as Frederic III. At last this device, the prophetic realization almost of the reign of Charles V., was found, to the great joy of the old emperor, who, feeling that after this last intellectual effort of his sagacity, earth had no further claims upon his attention, died on the 19th of August, 1493, leaving the empire to his son Maximilian. This device was the five vowels, A, E, I, O, U, which formed the initials of the following five words:

"Austriæ est imperare orbi universo.'

Such was the state of Germany. Having now considered the political condition of the four nations, gradually tending to become European powers, let us now review those secondary states which encircled Rome, the proper protectors of the spiritual Queen of the world, if it might be the ambition of any among these political giants to attack her, and for this purpose to cross the sea or the mountains, the Adriatic Gulf and the Alps, the Mediterranean or the Apennines. These states were the kingdom of Naples, the duchy of Milan, the magnificent republic of Florence, and that of Venice.'

The kingdom of Naples was governed by Ferdinand, a man advanced in years, and whose birth was not only illegitimate, but probably incestuous in its origin. His father, Alphonso of Arragon, held his crown from Joan of Naples, who had adopted him for her successor. But as through fear of there being no heir to the throne, the queen upon her deathbed had appointed two instead of one, Alphonso had to maintain his rights against René. The two pretenders disputed the succession for some time. At last the house of Arragon triumphed over that of Anjou, and during 1442, Alphonso established himself upon the throne; and it was the rights of the ejected pretender, as we shall presently see, which were reclaimed by Charles VIII.

Ferdinand possessed neither the good qualities nor the genius of his father, nevertheless he successively subdued his enemies. His two competitors were of superior merit. The one was the Count of Viana, his nephew, who, denouncing the shameless birth of his uncle, directed the party of the Arragonese; the other was Duke John of Calabria, at the head of the Anjou party. But he defeated both, and maintained himself upon his throne by his prudence, which degenerated not unfrequently into duplicity. He had a cultivated mind, possessed much scientific knowledge, and was well versed in legislation. He was of middling stature, his head large and well formed, the forehead bold and projecting, and impressively set off by his long white hair, which fell in flowing locks upon his shoulders. With respect to his physical strength, although he had rarely exhibited it in martial exercises, it was yet so great, that one day being accidentally in the market-place at Naples, he seized a bull which had broken loose by the horns, and pinioned it to the spot in spite of the efforts of the animal to free itself from his grasp. The election of Alexander was to him a source of great inquietude; and despite his prudence, he could not forbear expressing to the bearer of the news, "that he not only regretted the election, but did not believe that any good Christian could rejoice at it, inasmuch as Borgia having ever been a wicked man, would inevitably become a bad pontiff. Admitting even," he added, "that the choice were good, were it even justly satisfactory to others, it would not the less be fatal to the house of Arragon, from the very fact of his being born a subject of it,—that it had been the source of the rise and progress of his elevation; for if reasons of state are able to sever the dearest ties of kindred, much more can they destroy the simpler relations of obligation and allegiance." Ferdinand estimated the character of Alexander with his habitual tact; but as we shall see in the sequel, his opinions did not prevent his being the first to contract an alliance with him.

The Duchy of Milan belonged nominally to Giovanni Galeasso, grandson of Francis Sforza, who had invaded it the 26th of February, 1450, and had bequeathed it to Galeasso Mario, his son, father of the reigning prince: it belonged only *nominally* to him, because, in fact, the real possessor of the Milanese was at this period not the lawful heir; but his uncle Ludovico, surnamed "Il Moro," on account of the mulberry-tree which he bore in his escutcheon. Exiled with his two brothers, Philip, who died by poison in 1479, and Ascagno, who was raised to a cardinalship, he returned to Milan a few days after the assassination of Galeasso Mario, which took place on the 26th of December, 1476, in the Basilica of St. Stephen, and seized the regency of the young duke, then only eight years of age. Since that period, although his nephew had attained the age of twenty-two, Ludovico had governed in his name, and, in all probability, would continue so to do; for a few days after the unfortunate youth had expressed a wish to exercise his rights, he fell sick, and it was openly averred that he had taken one of those slow, yet mortal poisons, that the sovereigns of that day so constantly employed—so unhesitatingly indeed, that when even death arose from any natural malady, the cause was always sought for in its connexion with some political or personal interest. However this might be, Ludovico had consigned his nephew, too feeble to occupy himself in future with the affairs of his duchy, to the castle of Pavia, where he languished before the eyes of his wife, Isabella, daughter of the king Ferdinand of Naples. As for Ludovico, he was ambitious, crafty, and of daring courage, unscrupulous in the use of the sword or poison, which, as occasion required, without the slightest predilection or repugnance for one or the other, he alternately employed; and, moreover, was resolutely bent upon being the successor of his nephew, whether he lived or died.

Florence, although still retaining the name of a republic, had gradually become enslaved, and belonged in fact, if not by right, to Pietro de Medici, to whom Lorenzo, as has been related, had bequeathed it like a patrimonial possession. Unfortunately the son had not the genius of the father. He was handsome, it is true; Lorenzo, on the contrary, was particularly plain; his voice was agreeably modulated, Lorenzo snuffled; he was well read in classical literature, his conversation was ready and refined, and he could extemporize in verse almost as fluently as he who was surnamed "the Magnificent;" but ignorant himself of politics, he was haughty and overbearing to those who had made them their pursuit. In addition, a man ardent in the pursuit of pleasure, passionately addicted to women, incessantly occupied in such manly exercises as would best recommend him to their notice, particularly tennis, a game in which he was exceedingly expert, and now proposing, as soon as his mourning was laid aside, to dazzle not only Florence but Italy by the splendour of his court, and the magnificence of his fêtes. Such at least was the resolution of Pietro, but Heaven had otherwise decided.

As regarded the republic of Venice, of which Agostino Barbarigo was the doge, she was at this period in the full ascendancy of her power and splendour. From Cadiz to the Palus Mæotides every port was opened to her thousand vessels; she possessed in Italy, beyond the boundary of the lagoons, and of the ancient duchy of Venice, the provinces of Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona, Verona, Vicenza and Padua, the Trevisano, which comprises the Feltrino, and the principality of Ravenna. She retained the Frioul except Aquilea, Istria except Trieste, upon the eastern coast of the gulf, Zara, Spoletro, and the shores of Albania; in the Ionian sea, the islands of Zante and of Corfu; in Greece, Lepanto and Patras; and in the Morea, Moron, Ceron, Napoli de Romania and Argos; and in the Archipelago, Candia and the kingdom of Cyprus. Thus the possessions of the republic extended from the mouth of the Po to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, and Italy and Greece formed the suburbs of Venice.

The territory left free by Naples, Milan, Florence and Venice, was the booty of petty tyrants who exercised a despotism therein; thus the Colonna were established at Ostia and at Nettuno, the Montefeltri at Urbino, the Manfredi at Faenza, the Bentivogli at Bologna, the Malatesta at Rimini, the Vitelli at Cità di Castello, the Baglioni at Perugia, the Orsini at Vicovaro, and the Princes d'Este at Ferrara.

Lastly, placed at the summit of the spiral elevation of this immense circle, composed of the greater European powers, of minor states, and of petty tyrants, Rome appeared the most prominent; but the weakest of all, destitute of influence and territory, poor, unarmed, and defenceless. All this it was the object of the newly-elected pontiff to remedy, and to restore. Let us consider, then, the character of the man who had undertaken to accomplish such a project.

Roderic Lenzioli was born at Valentia, in Spain, in 1430 or 1431, and according to various authors, was the descendant, upon his mother's side, of a family originally of regal extraction, and who, before the tiara was the object of their ambition, had preferred claims to the crowns of Arragon and Valentia. The vivacity of his mind was remarkable in his infancy: he early evinced a great aptitude for the sciences, particularly the legislative, and was thus soon distinguished as a jurist; and by his ability in discussing and deciding the most intricate cases, he acquired an extensive reputation. He was soon weary of his civilian's honours, which he abandoned suddenly for the military profession; but after some actions sufficient to show his courage and presence of mind, he became disgusted with this also; and as at the moment when this new feeling prevailed his father died, and left him a considerable fortune, he resolved to forsake all pursuits, and to live as the capriciousness of his fancy might dictate. It was at this period he became attached to a widow with two daughters. She died. Roderic became the guardian of her children; he placed one in a convent, and as the other was one of the greatest beauties of the day, he reserved her for his mistress. This was the celebrated Rosa Vanozza, by whom he had five children, Francesco, Cesar, Lucretia, and Guiffry; the name of the fifth is unknown. Retired from public life, Roderic lived entirely secluded amid his family, when he heard that his uncle, who had ever loved him as a son, had been chosen pope, under the name of Calixtus the Third. But love had so silenced the whispers of ambition that the exaltation of his uncle became almost the source of fearful regret lest it might recall him from his retreat. Accordingly, instead of proceeding to Rome, as another in his situation would have done, he was content with merely addressing a letter to his holiness, entreating the continuance of his protecting kindness, and praying he might enjoy the happiness of a long and prosperous pontificate. This moderation of one of his relations, amid the grasping ambitions which met the pontiff at every step, particularly impressed Calixtus; he knew and felt the value of Roderic, and pressed on all sides by the importunities of a miserable mediocrity, he more highly appreciated the capacity which so modestly withdrew: he, therefore, instantly replied; and his reply was an injunction to his nephew to proceed immediately to Rome. This letter destroyed those schemes of happiness that Roderic had devised, and in the fulfilment of which he might have slumbered out existence as an ordinary man, had not fortune thus drawn him from so narrow a sphere. Roderic was happy, Roderic was rich; his evil passions, if not extinct, were dormant; he shrunk from the contrast of the happy repose of his present mode of life with the excited, ambitious career which the future offered. He delayed his departure, in the hope that Calixtus would forget him. The hope was unfulfilled: two months afterwards, a Roman prelate, the bearer of the nomination of Roderic to a benefice of the annual value of twenty thousand ducats, and a command to the incumbent to take immediate possession, arrived at Valentia. He could no longer delay; he obeyed therefore; but unwilling to sever himself from the source of his happiness for eight years, Rosa Vanozza departed also, and, whilst he proceeded to Rome, she journeyed to Venice, accompanied by two servants, under the care of a noble Spaniard, named Manuel Melchiori. Fortune was faithful to her promises: the pope received him as his son, and Roderic was made successively Archbishop of Valentia, cardinal, deacon, and vice-chancellor. To these Calixtus added a revenue of forty thousand ducats; and thus, at scarcely thirty-five years of age, Roderic was equal, both in wealth and power, to a prince.

It was with reluctance, however, that he accepted the cardinalship, which fixed his residence at Rome, and would have preferred the appointment of vicar-general of the church—a position which offered greater facilities of intercourse with his mistress and his family; but Calixtus pointed out the possibility of his future election to the pontificate, and from that hour the thought of being the supreme ruler of kings and nations so forcibly mastered and absorbed all the desires of his mind, that the vision which his uncle had presented was ever present to his eyes. Thenceforward he displayed that intense hypocrisy which made him the most perfect incarnation of the evil one that has ever probably existed upon earth. Roderic was no longer the same man; the words of humility and repentance ever trembled on his lips; with downcast took she seemed to bend beneath the remorse of his past life. Despising the wealth which he had acquired, and which being, as he said, the property of the poor, ought to be distributed for their good, he spent his life in churches, in monasteries, or hospitals; acquiring, even among his enemies, the reputation of a Solomon for wisdom, of a Job for patience, and of Moses for the promulgation of the Word of God. One person could alone estimate the value of the pious cardinal's conversion—it was Rosa Vanozza. This pious fraud was of advantage, for his protector died after a reign of three years, three months, and nineteen days, and it was the opinion of his merits that alone sustained him against the numerous enemies his rapid fortune had raised up. Thus, during the entire pontificate of Pius the Second, he remained in seclusion, nor did he reappear until under Sixtus the Fourth, who gave him the abbey of Subiaco, and appointed him legate to the courts of Arragon and Portugal. Upon his return, which took place under the pontificate of Innocent the Eighth, he decided upon removing his family to Rome; they were, therefore, brought there by Don Melchiori, who from that time passed as the husband of Vanozza, under the name of Count Ferdinand of Castile. The Cardinal Roderic welcomed the noble Spaniard as a compatriot and a friend; and he, intending to pass his life in retirement, occupied for that purpose a house in the street Della Lungara, near the church Regina Cœli, upon the banks of the Tiber. It was here, after a day passed in prayer and works of piety, that Roderic came every evening to lay aside the mask of hypocrisy he had worn. Then, it was said (although of this no one can adduce proof), commenced the most infamous practices. It was rumoured that incestuous intercourse was carried on between the parents and their children, and between Lucretia and her brothers; and these opinions were so general, that to silence them, or divert their current, Roderic sent Cesar to study at Pisa, and married Lucretia to a young noble of Arragon, so that Vanozza and her two sons alone remained at Rome. Such was his domestic life when Innocent the Eighth died, and Roderic Borgia was elected in his place.

CHAPTER II.

We have seen the means employed to secure the nomination. The five cardinals, therefore, who had not participated in this act of simony, protested against its ratification; but, no matter by what means, Roderic had the majority; and, whether they were underhand or not, he was, nevertheless, the two hundred and sixteenth successor of St. Peter. Although he had thus gained his end, Alexander the Sixth did not yet venture to throw aside the mask so long worn by the Cardinal Borgia; nevertheless, upon the announcement of his election, he could not conceal his joy. With hands upraised to heaven, and with the accent of satisfied ambition, he cried, "Am I then Pope? Am I, indeed, the Vicar of Christ—the keystone of the arch of the Christian world?" "Yes, holy father," replied the Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, the man who had sold the nine votes at his disposal in the conclave, "yes; and we shall trust by this election to have given glory to God, peace to the church, and joyful satisfaction to Christianity, inasmuch as you have been chosen by the Eternal Spirit as the most worthy of your brethren." Short as was this reply, the new pope had already regained the complete mastery of his emotions, and in a low voice, and with his hands crossed upon his breast, he said, "It is our prayer, my brethren, that God may accord to us his merciful protection, and bless our labours, as he did those of the Apostle to whom he confided the government of the church,—a government which, deprived of divine assistance, we should be totally unable to undertake; but Heaven has promised its spiritual direction to him that seeks it; and we pray that it may be granted us, and from you, my brethren, we doubt not that we shall receive that obedience which is due to the head of the church, imitating in this respect the submission which the flock of Christ evinced for the chief of the apostles." This discourse finished, Alexander clothed himself in the pontifical robes, and caused the slips of paper, upon which his name was written in Latin, to be thrown from the window, which, scattered by the wind, seemed to bear to the world the news of the great event, so soon to change the political destiny of Italy.

Cesar Borgia received the news of the election of his father at the University of Pisa. He had sometimes indulged in reveries of such prosperous ambition; nevertheless their fulfilment was unexpected, and his joy almost extravagant. He was then a youth of about two or three and twenty, adroit in all manly, and particularly martial exercises; riding unsaddled horses of the highest spirit, and able to sever a bull's head from his body by a single stroke of his sword. His disposition was haughty, jealous, and dissembling, and, according to Tommasi, he was great among the impious, as his brother Francesco was good among the great. As to his personal appearance, even contemporaneous authors have transmitted to us the most contradictory descriptions. According to some, he was an abortion of ugliness, while others, on the contrary, are highly laudatory of his beauty. This contradiction arises from the circumstance, that at certain periods of the year, particularly in spring, his face was covered with blotches, which made him, for the time, an object of horror and disgust, while during the rest of the year he appeared the thoughtful-looking cavalier, with the black flowing hair, the pale complexion, and auburn beard, such as he is represented in the beautiful portrait painted of him by Raphael. Historians, chroniclers, and painters, all are agreed upon the intense expression of his eyes, describing them as emitting an incessant lustre, and investing him with the character of something infernal, or unearthly. Such was the man whose hopes were to be so soon gratified, and who had taken for his motto, *Aut Cæsar, aut nihil*—Cæsar, or nothing. Upon his father's election, he instantly departed for Rome, and scarcely was he recognised at the gates than the honours paid him bore witness to his change of fortune. At the Vatican these were increased : the nobles bowed before him, as to one greater than themselves. Thus impatient, and without visiting his mother, or any other member of his family, he went immediately to the presence of the pope, who, aware of his arrival, received him amid a brilliant and numerous assembly of the cardinals, his three brothers standing behind him. The manner of his holiness was kind, yet unaccompanied by any marks of paternal feeling ; he stooped and kissed his son's forehead, and made inquiry as to his health, and the mode of his return. Cesar replied that he was well, and entirely at the commands of his holiness ; that, as for the short fatigues and trifling inconveniences he had suffered during his return, they were more than compensated by the joy he felt in thus submissively offering his respects to one in every way so deserving of the pontificate. At these words, leaving Cesar still kneeling, and reseating himself with dignity, the pope, with a calm and sedate manner and expression, after an interval, thus addressed him, sufficiently loud to be heard by all, and slowly, so that every word might be well considered and remembered :—

"We are well persuaded, Cesar, that you heartily rejoice to see us thus elevated, so far beyond our merits, to a height, which it has pleased the Divine Goodness to permit us to ascend. That joy was due to us, first as gratitude for the affection we have ever borne you, and still bear ; and further on account of your own interest, since you might justly hope to receive hereafter, from our hands, the rewards that doubtless the excellence of your life will merit. But if your joy (and we address ourselves to you as we have already done to your brother) be founded on any other supposition, you have then greatly deceived yourself, and assuredly you will find, Cesar, every expectation disappointed. We have aspired, perhaps, and we confess it with humility before you all, with an immoderate desire, to the sovereignty of the pontificate ; to reach which we have followed every path that human industry could open, but we have done so with the solemn resolution that once arrived at the point to which it led, our way thenceforward should be that only, which leads towards the more spiritual worship of the Deity, and a greater veneration of the Holy See ; to the end, that the memory of the good, we shall do, may efface the ignominious recollection of the things which we have done. And this, in such a manner, that we shall be enabled, we trust, to leave to our successors a route wherein, if they trace not the steps of a saint, they may find and follow at least in those of a pontiff. He who has favoured the means, now claims their result, and well disposed are we most fully to liquidate the debt contracted: and therefore is it we tremble to awake by fraud, on our parts, the rigour of his justice. One hinderance could alone frustrate our designs;—it would be, to feel too great an interest in your advancement. Thus have we steeled ourselves beforehand against the influence of affection; and have prayed that we may be sustained, that we falter not on your account, for the pontiff who slips in the paths of favouritism, falls, and cannot fall without dishonour to the Holy See. We shall deplore to the end of our life those faults to which we owe the experience of this truth; and God grant that Calixtus, our uncle, suffer not even now in purgatory, from the weight of our sins, much rather than by reason of his own. Alas! he was so richly endowed with virtue, his heart was so disposed to good;—but he loved too much his kindred, and among them ourselves, so that following blindly the dictates of this feeling, he accumulated upon a few, and these the least deserving, the benefices which should have recompensed the merits of many. Indeed, he gathered unto our house those treasures which he should not have amassed, to the deprivation of the poor, or which should have been more righteously employed. He dismembered the ecclesiastical states already so limited and unprotected, the duchy of Spoleto, as well as other rich domains, in order that we might possess them as fiefs; he trusted to our infirmities the offices of vice-chancellor and vice-prefect of Rome, the generalship of the church, and other grave responsibilities, which, instead of being thus monopolized by us, should have been conferred on those who were far more worthy of such rewards. There were some, indeed, elevated to offices of dignity upon our recommendation, but whose only merit was our too partial favour, whilst others were neglected or depressed, whose only fault was the jealousy they inspired by their worth. To despoil Ferdinand of Arragon of the kingdom of Naples he kindled a terrible war, the prosperous result of which only tended to augment our greatness, whilst defeat would have brought only loss and dishonour to the Holy See. Finally, by permitting himself to be thus governed by those who sacrificed the public good to their private interests, he prejudiced and endangered, not alone the pontificate, but his renown, and that which was far more momentous, his immortal soul. Nevertheless, behold the wisdom of the judgments of God! firmly and constantly as he laboured for the establishment of our fortunes, scarcely had his death vacated the chair we occupy, than we were thrown down from the height we had reached, abandoned to the rage of the people, and to the vindictive passions of those Roman nobles, who resented, as a wrong to themselves, the favours he had extended to their enemies. Insomuch that, not only was it necessary to dispossess ourselves of the wealth and dignities with which our uncle had enriched us, but still more, to save our lives, and those of our friends, to condemn ourselves to a voluntary exile;—by the favour of which, we were alone enabled to shelter ourselves from the storm which the envy of our greatness had excited. To us it brought the full conviction, that God, frustrating the designs of men, when those designs are unjust, it is a great error for a pontiff to direct his attention to the welfare of a house which can be but of a few years' duration, rather than to the prosperity of a church which is ordained to be eternal; that it is a foolish policy which, possessing a power, neither hereditary nor transmissive, seeks to erect dominion and greatness upon any basis but that of great virtues, dedicated to the common good. Similarly also is it with politicians, who seek to give duration to their schemes by any other means than those which restrain the unexpected whirlwinds which rising, may raise a tempest amid a calm;—that is, create a mass of enemies, the determined action of one of whom will be more destructive to their interests, than the deceitful demonstrations of a hundred friends. If you and your brothers pursue the honourable path which we now open to you, you will form no desire that will not be instantly gratified; but if, on the contrary, you hope to find our affection the handmaid of your irregular desires, you will be quickly convinced that we are the pontiff for the church, and not for a family; and that, as the vicar of Christ, we desire to act as we shall judge to be for the good of Christianity, but not as you may consider—YOU, to be for your advantage; and this well understood, receive, Cesar, our benediction." And at the words, Alexander VI. arose, laid his hand upon his son, who was still kneeling, and then retired to his apartments, without inviting him to follow. The youth remained stupified by a discourse so unexpected, and which destroyed at a single blow his long-cherished expectations. Then rising confused, and tottering like a drunken man, he left immediately the Vatican, and proceeded to his mother, of whom he had not at first thought, and to whom he returned in his distress. Vanozza united at once all the virtues and the vices of a Spanish courtesan; devout to the Madonna to the lowest superstition; kind to her children even unto weakness; submissive to Roderic, even to debauchery; but, nevertheless, confident of the possession of a power which she had wielded for thirty years, and certain, like the serpent, of being able to crush in her folds, when she could not fascinate by her looks.

Vanozza knew the profound hypocrisy of her paramour, and consequently had no hesitation in reassuring the hopes of Cesar. She was right so to do. In fact, Alexander VI., declaim as he might against the abuses of family patronage, had already calculated the political advantage he could derive from their concurrence; he felt that he might entirely rely, if not upon Francesco and Guiffry, at least upon Lucretia and Cesar. She, in truth, was the counterpart of her brother. Licentious from an impure imagination, impious from natural impulse, ambitious upon calculation, Lucretia panted after pleasure, flattery, the honours of rank, gold, jewels, rich dresses, and courtly palaces. A Spaniard under her light hair, a courtesan under her open guileless manner, she had the features of one of Raphael's Madonnas, and the heart of Messalina; she was doubly dear to Roderic, who saw reflected in her his passions and his vices.

At first nothing belied the principles which Alexander had professed in his address to his son, and the first year of his pontificate surpassed the hopes which the Romans had indulged since his election. He so liberally provided for the supply of the public granaries, that in the memory of man there had never been such wondrous abundance; and that this blessing might descend to the poorest, successive grants, raised upon his private fortune, enabled them to share in the general plenty, from which they had been so long excluded. He provided for the safety of the city, by establishing, a few days after his accession, a vigilant police, and a court of justice, composed of men of irreproachable reputation, charged with the prosecution of all those nocturnal outrages so frequent under the preceding pontificate, that even their number ensured impunity, and the first judgments of which indicated a determined severity, which neither the rank nor power of the accused could mitigate. This presented so great a contrast with the preceding corruption, during which the vice-chamberlain publicly replied to those who denounced the venality of the tribunals, "God willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should live, and purchase the pardon of his offences," that the capital of the Christian world believed the pure days of the pontificate now dawned on it again. Thus, at the expiration of a year, Alexander had regained the spiritual power his predecessors had lost. It remained, towards the full success of the first outlines of his colossal design, to re-establish also his political influence. There were two modes of effecting this:—by alliances or conquests. He decided for the first. The noble Arroganese who had married Lucretia, at that time the daughter only of the Cardinal Roderic Borgia, was neither by birth, fortune, nor genius, capable of mingling with any degree of influence in the political intrigues of Alexander VI. Separation, therefore, was decreed to be divorce, and Lucretia Borgia was free to remarry.

The pope opened two negotiations at the same time; he required an ally who could carefully watch the policy of the neighbouring states. Giovanni Sforza, grandson of Alexander Sforza, brother of Francis Duke of Milan, was lord of Pesaro, the local situation of which near the sea, between Florence and Venice, was most conveniently adapted for his purpose; he was therefore selected; and as their interests were the same, Giovanni Sforza became soon the second husband of Lucretia. At the same time overtures had been made to Alfonso of Arragon, to conclude a marriage between Donna Sancia, his natural daughter, and Guiffry, the third son of the pope; but as Ferdinand wished to obtain every possible advantage by this alliance, he delayed the negotiations, alleging the children were not yet of a marriageable age, and that consequently, how great so ever the honour of such an alliance, nothing at present urged its fulfilment. Thus affairs stood, to the great discontent of Alexander, who did not deceive himself as to the real cause of this evasion, but received it as it was meant—for a refusal. Alexander and Ferdinand retained then their former positions, political gamesters of equal skill, and waiting till events should declare for the one or the other. Fortune decided for Alexander.

CHAPTER III.

Italy, although at peace, felt instinctively that it was but the calm which precedes the storm. She was too rich, too prosperous, not to be a source of envy to all other nations. The neglect and jealousy of the Florentine republic had not yet converted, indeed, the plains of Pisa into a swamp; the contests of the Colonna and the Orsini had not yet changed the rich campagna of Rome into a barren desert; the Marquis of Marignano had not yet razed to the ground one hundred and twenty villages in the republic of Sienna alone; the "Maremme" were unwholesome, but not then deadly; and Flavio Bionao, in 1450, describing Ostia, which now reckons but thirty residents, remarks that it was less flourishing than during the time of the Romans: that is, when it comprised fifty thousand. The peasantry of Italy were at this period in the most prosperous condition: instead of living scattered and separated the one from the other, they inhabited well-enclosed towns, which protected their harvests and cattle; and their houses, at least such as remain, exhibit more of taste, of art, and wealth, than those of our citizens at the present time; and this union of common interests, this confederacy of individuals in fortified villages, had by degrees given them an importance which neither the peasantry of France nor the serfs of Germany had ever possessed. They were armed, had a common treasury, magistrates of their own choice; and when they fought, at least they fought for the defence of their country.

Nor was commerce less flourishing than agriculture. Manufactories of silk, wool, hemp, furs, alum, sulphur, and bitumen were everywhere seen; productions not indigenous to the soil were brought from the Black Sea, Egypt, Spain, and France, and reshipped frequently for the countries whence they had been imported, after the labour of the artist had redoubled their value; the rich contributed their merchandise, the poor their labour; the one was sure not to be deprived of industry, the other not to want occupation. Nor had the fine arts been neglected; Dante, Giotto, Brunelleschi, Donatello were dead, but Ariosto, Raphael, Bramante, and Michael Angelo were rising. Rome, Florence, and Naples inherited the *chefs-d'œuvres* of antiquity; and the manuscripts of Æschylus, of Sophocles, and Euripides, owing to the conquest of Mahomet the Second, had been added to the statues of Xantippus, Phidias, and Praxiteles. The principal sovereigns of Italy, when viewing these plains waving with the most abundant harvests, the wealthy villages, flourishing manufactories, and richly decorated churches, and then remarking the comparative barbarism of the nations which surrounded them, were well aware, however uncertain the time, that their country would yet become to other nations what America was to Spain—a vast mine of gold to work and pillage. Consequently, from 1480, Naples, Milan, Florence, and Ferrara had signed a league offensive and defensive for mutual protection. Louis Sforza, from the contiguity of his possessions to France, the most interested in its maintenance, saw in the election of Alexander a fresh opportunity, not only of rendering it closer, but also of impressing upon Europe an opinion of its power and unity.

It was customary upon the election of a pontiff for the Christian states to send a solemn embassy to Rome, to renew in the name of each their vows of obedience to the holy see. Louis Sforza conceived the project of assembling the ambassadors of the four powers so as to enable them to make their public entry together into Rome upon the same day, and to commission one only of their number, the envoy of the King of Naples, to address the pontiff in behalf of all. The plan was not, unhappily, in accordance with the splendid designs of Pietro de Medici. This proud youth, who had been appointed ambassador from the Florentine republic, saw in the mission intrusted to him by his fellow-citizens, an opportunity only of displaying his love of ostentation and his wealth. From the day of his appointment, his palace was thronged with tailors, jewellers, and merchants of stuffs. He had prepared the richest dresses embroidered with precious stones, taken from the acquisitions of his family. The richest jewels were stuck upon the clothes of his pages, one of whom, his favourite, wore a collar of pearls valued at one hundred thousand ducats. On the other hand, the Bishop of Arezzo, Gentile, who had been the preceptor of Lorenzo, who was appointed the coadjutor of Pietro, and upon whom devolved the duty of offering the congratulations of the republic, had prepared his discourse and relied as much upon the charms of his eloquence to influence his hearers, as Pietro upon his wealth to dazzle the spectators. Now the eloquence of the former was merely thrown away if the address were delivered by the envoy of the King of Naples, and the magnificent retinue of Pietro would be unobserved if he entered Rome amid the mixed cohort of the other ambassadors. And these two important interests, compromised by the proposal of the Duke of Milan, revolutionized the state of Italy! Ferdinand had already agreed to the plan suggested by Louis Sforza, when, influenced by Pietro, he suddenly withdrew his consent. Sforza sought the cause of this retractation, and found that the influence which had overcome his own was that of Pietro. Unable to comprehend the real motives which had prompted this opposition, he saw in it a secret league against him, and attributed it to a change of policy consequent upon the death of Lorenzo. Whatever the cause might be, it was evidently detrimental to his interests. Florence, the old ally of Milan, abandoned him for Naples. He resolved to equalize the scale, and revealing to Alexander the policy of Pietro and Ferdinand, he proposed an alliance, offensive and defensive, to include also the republic of Venice, while at the same time the Duke of Ferrara should be summoned to decide which party he would join. Alexander, mortified by the previous conduct of Ferdinand, accepted the proposals of Louis; and the confederation, by which the new allies bound themselves to maintain, for the preservation of the public peace, an army of twenty thousand horse and ten thousand foot soldiers, was signed on the 22d of April, 1493. Ferdinand watched this alliance with anxiety, but he thought to neutralize its effects by stripping Louis Sforza of his dominions; he therefore claimed from the Duke of Milan the resignation of the sovereign power into the hands of his nephew, with the threat otherwise of being declared an usurper. The blow was terrible, but carried with it the risk of urging Louis to one of those political combinations, before which he never recoiled, however dangerous they might be. This actually occurred. Sforza, disturbed in the possession of his duchy, resolved to menace Ferdinand with the loss of his kingdom. Nothing was more easy; he knew the warlike inclinations of Charles VIII., and the pretensions of the crown of France to the throne of Naples. He despatched two ambassadors to urge the youthful monarch to claim the rights of the house of Anjou usurped by that of Arragon; and the further to engage him in so distant and hazardous an enterprise, he offered him a free and friendly passage for his troops through his territories.

Such a proposal made to Charles VIII. could not fail; a radiant horizon extended itself around as if by enchantment; what Louis Sforza offered him was the control of the Mediterranean, the government of Italy: and it was also through Naples and Venice that the way was opened for the conquest of Turkey or the Holy Land, according as inclination led him to revenge the disasters of Nicopolis or of Mansourah. The proposal was gladly accepted: and, through the medium of Count Charles de

Belgiojoso and Count Cajazzo for Louis Sforza, and of the Bishop of St. Malo and the Seneschal de Beaucaire for Charles the Eighth, a secret convention was signed by which it was agreed—That the King of France should attempt the conquest of the kingdom of Naples; that the Duke of Milan should open to the King of France a passage through his estates, and should join him with five hundred lances; that the Duke of Milan should permit the King of France to arm as many vessels at Genoa as he might require. Finally, that the Duke of Milan should lend to the King of France two hundred thousand ducats, payable upon his departure. Upon his side Charles engaged:—to defend the individual authority of Louis Sforza over the duchy of Milan against whoever should attempt to deprive him of it. To leave in Asti, a city belonging to the Duke of Orleans, two hundred French lances, always ready to succour the house of Sforza. Lastly, to surrender to his ally the principality of Tarentum, upon the conquest of the kingdom of Naples. The treaty scarcely concluded, Charles, who over-rated its results, sought instantly to free himself from every hinderance that might possibly retard or shackle his design. This was a requisite precaution, for his relations with the great European powers were far from being such as he could desire. Henry VII. had landed at Calais with a formidable army, and menaced France with another invasion. Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, if they had not contributed towards the fall of the house of Anjou, had, at least, assisted the branch of Arragon with money and soldiers. The war with the King of the Romans was excited still more by the return of Margaret of Burgundy to Maximilian, her father, and the marriage that Charles had contracted with Anne of Brittany. By the treaty of Naples, dated 3d of November, 1492, Henry VII. withdrew himself from his alliance with the King of the Romans, and engaged no further to pursue his conquests.

This cost Charles VIII. seven hundred and forty-five thousand crowns of gold, and the expenses of the war in Brittany. By the treaty of Barcelona, dated the 19th January, 1493, Ferdinand and Isabella were bound not to assist their cousin, the King of Naples, and to offer no opposition to the projects of the court of France with regard to Italy. This cost Charles VIII. Perpignan, the county of Rousellon, and La Cerdagne, which John of Arragon had pledged to Louis XI. for three hundred thousand ducats, and of which Louis XI. had refused the equitable redemption, so clearly did the royal old fox perceive the importance of those gates opening upon the Pyrenees, which, in case of war, he could close from within. Finally, by the treaty of Senlis, dated the 23d May, 1493, Maximilian condescended to forgive France the insult he had received from its king. This cost Charles VIII. the countries of Burgundy, Artois, Charolais, and the signory of Noyers, which he had received as the dowery of Margaret; and, moreover, the cities of Aire, Hesdin, and Bethune, which he engaged to deliver up to Philip of Austria, upon his attaining his majority.

At the expense of these sacrifices, Charles was at peace with his neighbours, and could now undertake the project suggested to him by Louis Sforza, who had conceived it, piqued at the refusal to concur in his plan for the deputation—a refusal arising from the desire of Pietro de Medici to display his costly jewels; and of Gentile, to manifest his eloquence.

Thus the vanity of a pedant, and the pride of a scholar, were about to convulse the world from the gulf of Tarentum to the Pyrenees. Alexander VI., in the centre of this extending earthquake, of which as yet Italy had not felt the shocks, had profited, by the absorbing interests of the times, to falsify in the first instance the opinions he had avowed, by creating John Borgia, his nephew, who had been in the preceding pontificate made bishop of Montreal and governor of Rome—a cardinal.

This promotion was announced without the slightest opposition; it was *a feeler* put forth by Alexander, and its success induced him shortly after to collate Cesar Borgia to the archbishopric of Valentia; a benefice he himself had held prior to his election to the pontificate. But here the opposition was from the side of the recipient of the gift. The impetuous youth, with all the passions and the vices of a captain of condottieri, felt repugnance to assume even the mere appearance of the clerical virtues; but knowing, from his father's positive assertion, that the higher secular dignities were reserved for his eldest brother, he decided upon accepting the proffered benefit, for fear of obtaining nothing else; but his hate of Francesco is increased, for thenceforth he was doubly his rival, in love and in the paths of ambition. Suddenly, Alexander VI. received overtures from Ferdinand; but he was too wary a politician to welcome this return without inquiring into its cause. He soon learnt the designs of the court of France against the kingdom of Naples, and all was explained. It was now his turn to dictate the terms of an alliance. He required, then, the immediate marriage of Guiffry, his third son, with Donna Sancia, the natural daughter of Alphonso. He required, as her dowery, the principality of Squillace, and the county of Cariati, with a revenue of ten thousand ducats, and the rank of protonotary, which was one of the seven chief offices of the crown, for her husband. He required for his eldest son, whom Ferdinand the Catholic had created Duke of Gandia, the principality of Tucarico, the counties of Chiaramonte, Lauria, and Carinola, with an annuity of twelve thousand ducats, and the appointment to the first of the seven great offices which might become vacant. He required that Virginio Orsini, his ambassador at the Neapolitan court, should hold the third of these offices, which was that of constable, the highest of all. Lastly, he required that Julian de la Rovere, one of the five cardinals who had protested against his election, and who had intrenched himself at Ostia, should be forced to quit that city, which was to be placed in his possession. And all that he required was conceded. In return, the pope engaged only, not to withdraw from the house of Arragon the investiture of the kingdom of Naples, which had been granted to it by his predecessors. This was paying rather a high price for a simple promise; but upon this promise, if faithfully kept, depended the legitimacy of Ferdinand's power. For Naples was a fief of the Holy See; and to the pope alone belonged the right of deciding the equitable claims of each competitor. The continuance of the investiture was of the highest importance, therefore, to the house of Arragon, at the moment when that of Anjou was rising in arms, to strip it of its possessions.

Thus a year had scarcely elapsed since his accession, and Alexander had greatly promoted the extension of his political power. He himself held, it is true, the least of the Italian states, but by the alliance of his daughter Lucretia with the sovereign of Pesaro, and that of the prince of Squillace with Donna Sancia, together with the territorial concessions made to the Duke of Gandia, his influence extended from Venice to the confines of Calabria.

This treaty, so advantageous for him, being once signed, as Cesar complained of being invariably neglected in the distribution of the paternal bounty, he created him cardinal of Santa Maria Novella. But as hitherto the church could not produce an instance of a bastard assuming the purple, the pope found four witnesses, who avouched Cesar to be the son of count Ferdinand of Castile. Don Melchiori was in fact an inestimable man; he played the character of father with as much natural ease as that of husband. The marriage of his natural children, however affiliated, was celebrated with due splendour, with the pomp of royalty and of the church; and as the pope had arranged that they should reside near him, the new cardinal, Cesar Borgia, undertook the regulations both of their entry and reception at Rome, to which Lucretia, who enjoyed an influence unexampled at the papal court, desired to add all the éclat in her power. The one, therefore, proceeded to receive the bride with a magnificent escort of cardinals and nobles, whilst the other awaited their arrival in one of the halls of the Vatican, surrounded by the noblest and most beautiful ladies of Rome. A throne was erected there for the pope, and at his feet were placed cushions for Lucretia and Donna Sancia; "so that," says Tommaso Tommasi, "by the appearance of the assembly, the general conversation, and manners which prevailed, one might rather have imagined himself present at the splendid and voluptuous audience of a king of Assyria, rather than at the severe consistory of a Roman pontiff, who ought in every action to add brighter purity to the sacred name he bears. But," adds the same historian, "if the vigils of Pentecost were so becomingly passed, the ceremonies with which, upon the following day, they celebrated the descent of the Holy Spirit, were not less reverential, nor less in accordance with the spirit of the church;" for here follows what the master of the ceremonies has entered in his daily journal.

"The Pope entered the Basilica of the Holy Apostles, and near him were seated, by the marble desks, where generally the canons of St. Peter chant the epistle and the gospel, Lucretia, his daughter, and Sancia, his daughter-in-law; and around them, to the disgrace of the church and the extreme scandal of the people, many more Roman ladies, much more worthy of inhabiting the city of Messalina than that of St. Peter."

Thus, at Rome and Naples, they slept amid the expectations of the coming storm; thus they wasted time and dissipated their treasure; and this whilst the French, alert and eager, shook on high the torches with which they were about to wrap Italy in flames. The ambitious intentions of Charles VIII. were, indeed, now no longer a matter of doubt. The young king had sent an embassy, composed of Perron de Baschi, of Briçonnet, of Aubigny, and the president of the parliament of Provence, to the different states of Italy, whose instructions were to require from the Italian princes their co-operation in recovering for the house of Anjou the rights usurped by the crown of Arragon.

Overtures were first made by them to the Venetians, whose advice and assistance they solicited on the part of the king, their master; but the Venetians, faithful to their political system, which had earned for them the nickname of the Jews of Christianity, replied, that they regretted they could not assist the young king, their troops being necessarily always under arms to guard against surprise by the Turks; and that as for advice, far be it from them to presume to proffer it to a prince surrounded by experienced generals and the wisest councillors. Perron de Baschi, unable to obtain any other reply, next addressed himself to Florence. Pietro de Medici received him in full council, having for this purpose assembled not only the seventy, but also all the gonfalonieri belonging to the signory for the last thirty-four years. The ambassador requested a passage for the French troops through the states of the republic, and their requisite supplies of provisions and forage, at the expense of the king. The republic replied, that if the army of Charles were directed against the Turks, instead of against Ferdinand, they would most readily assent to his request; but, connected as they were with the house of Arragon by a formal treaty, they could not betray it by complying with this proposal. Whereupon they proceeded to Sienna. This inconsiderable republic, alarmed by the honour of the king's attention, answered, it was their fervent desire to maintain an exact neutrality, the state being too weak to declare itself beforehand for or against such rivals, obliged as it necessarily would be to follow the banners of the victor. Provided with this reply, which at least had the merit of frankness to recommend it, the envoys set forward to Rome, and, at an audience of the pope, demanded on behalf of their master the investiture of the kingdom of Naples. Alexander replied that, his predecessors having given this to the princes of the house of Arragon, he could not withdraw it without proof that the house of Anjou had stronger claims than he whom they sought to dispossess; further, he reminded Perron de Baschi, that Naples being a fief of the holy see, to the pope alone belonged the right of appointing the sovereign, and that consequently to attack the present possessor of the throne was to war with the church.

The result of the embassy was not very promising to Charles; he resolved, therefore, to rely for aid only upon his ally, Louis Sforza, and to refer all other points to the decision of the sword. The news which reached him about the same time still further confirmed his resolution: it was the death of Ferdinand. On returning from the chase, the aged monarch was attacked by a catarrhal cough, from the effects of which he died on the 25th of January, 1494, at the age of seventy, after a reign of thirty-six years, leaving his throne to his eldest son, Alphonso, who was immediately proclaimed his successor. The new king was not a novice in war; had already "earned his spurs;" he had fought, and successfully, against the Florentines and Venetians, and had driven the Turks from Otranto; he passed, moreover, for a man as subtle as his father in the tortuous policy, then so much prized and employed by the several courts of Italy; nor did he despair of being enabled to enrol, even among his allies, Bajazet II., with whom he was then at war. When he was made acquainted with the designs of Charles, he despatched, therefore, Camillo Pandone to Bajazet to awaken his attention to the fact that the Italian expedition was but a mere pretext of the king of France to advance nearer the Mahometan conquests; and that once upon the Adriatic, Charles could transport in two days his army to Macedonia, and, by land, thence march upon Constantinople. He required, therefore, from the emperor, in defence of their common interests, six thousand horse and as many foot-soldiers, to be maintained at his cost during their service in Italy. Pandone was to have been joined at Tarentum by George Bucciarda, commissioned by the pope to solicit also in his name the aid of the

Turks against the Christians. But whilst awaiting the reply of Bajazet, which might be for some months delayed, Alfonzo proposed a meeting between the pope, Pietro de Medici, and himself, to deliberate upon points of urgency. This meeting was fixed at Vico-varo, near Tivoli, where the several members of it met upon the day appointed. Alfonso, who, upon his departure from Naples, had already arranged his plan of naval operations, and given to his brother Frederic the command of a fleet of thirty-five galleys, eighteen large and twelve smaller vessels of war, with which to watch the fleet which Charles was arming in the port of Genoa, was now more particularly bent upon concerting with his allies the opening of the campaign by land. He had at his immediate disposal, and without reckoning the contingent his allies were engaged to furnish, one hundred squadrons of heavy cavalry and three thousand cross-bowmen and light horse. He proposed, therefore, to advance immediately upon Lombardy to effect a revolution in favour of Galeasso and to drive Louis Sforza from Milan before the French army should arrive; so that at the instant he descended the Alps Charles should find an enemy it would be requisite to combat, instead of an ally who had promised a free passage through his dominions, troops, and money. This was a proposal at once of a great politician and of a daring commander; but as each was assembled for their private interests and not for the public good, this advice was coldly received by Pietro, who saw in it no greater part allotted him to play in war than had been proposed in the embassy, and directly opposed by Alexander, who calculated upon the employment of the troops of Alfonso for his own advantage. He reminded, therefore, the King of Naples that one of the promised conditions of the investiture was the expulsion of the Cardinal Julian de la Rovere from the city of Ostia, and the cession of that city to him, according to the articles of the treaty. Moreover, the favours conferred upon Virginio Orsini, consequent upon his embassy to Naples, had raised against him the enmity of Prosper Colonna and his brother, to whom belonged all the villages lying around Rome. Now the pope could not be left exposed to such powerful enemies, and the most pressing point was, therefore, his deliverance; it being most important that he should be in safety, inasmuch as the holy see was the life and soul of a league, of which the others were but the trunk and members. Although Alfonso very readily detected the flimsy motives which influenced Pietro de Medici, whilst Alexander had scarcely rendered it requisite for him to inquire for a moment as to his, he was yet obliged to yield to the decision of his allies, leaving to the one the defence of the Apennines, and aiding the other in ridding himself of his Romagnese neighbours. He pressed, therefore, the siege of Ostia, and gave to Virginio, who then commanded two hundred men at arms of the pope's, a squadron of his light horse, with orders to encamp about Rome and keep the Colonna in check. The remainder of his troops he divided into two divisions, the one under the command of his son Ferdinand, with which to scour the Romagna and compel the several petty princes to furnish their pomised contingents, whilst he himself with the other defended the passes of the Abruzzi.

The 23d of April Alexander was relieved from the first and the most dangerous of his enemies. Julian de la Rovere, seeing the impossibility of withstanding the troops of Alfonso, embarked on board a brigantine which was to convey him to Savona. As for Virginio Orsini, he commenced from that day the celebrated partisan war, which has converted the campagna of Rome into the most poetic desert of the earth.

In the mean time Charles VIII. was at Lyons, not only uncertain as to the route he should take, but beginning even to reflect upon the hazard of the expedition. Louis Sforza excepted, he had met with no support, so that it was not improbable that he would not only find the kingdom of Naples, but Italy, against him. He had expended almost all the funds at his disposal in the mere preparations for war; the Lady of Beaujeu and the Duke of Bourbon condemned strenuously the enterprise; Briçonnet, its adviser, shrunk from its defence; finally, more irresolute than ever, Charles had already countermanded the advance of some portion of his troops, when the cardinal Julian de la Rovere, expelled from Italy by the pope, arrived at Lyons, and sought an audience of the king. He hastened to his presence, urged at once by hate and the hope of revenge, and found Charlesprepa red to abandon his designs. He related to him the division which prevailed among his enemies, and its cause; he showed him how each was governed by self-interest; Pietro de Medici following the dictates of his pride, Alexander seeking only the political advancement of his house. He pointed out that his fleets already occupied the ports of Villa Franca, Marseilles, and Genoa, of which the equipments would be lost; he reminded him that he had already sent Pierre d'Urfe, his master of the horse, to prepare a splendid residence for him in the palaces of the Spinolas and the Dorias. Lastly, he depicted the ridicule, the disgrace, which would inevitably accrue, if he abandoned an enterprise so loudly vaunted, and for the execution of which he had been compelled to sign treaties so onerous in their conditions as those with Henry VII., Maximilian, and Ferdinand the Catholic. Julian de la Rovere had aimed well, he struck the pride of the young king, who no longer hesitated. He ordered his cousin the Duke of Orleans to take the command of the fleet, and repair immediately to Genoa, and he despatched a courier to Antoine de Bassey, baron of Tricastel, with directions to lead to Asti the two thousand foot soldiers whom he had raised in the Swiss cantons. Lastly, he himself advanced from Vienne in Dauphiny on the 23d of August, crossed the Alps at Mont Genèvre without the slightest opposition, and descended into Piedmont and the Montferrat, which were then governed by two regents, the Princes Charles Jean Aimé and Guillaume Jean, the sovereigns of these two principal cities being, the one six, the other eight years of age. They advanced to meet Charles, each at the head of a numerous and brilliant court, and both shining with jewels and precious stones. Charles, aware that notwithstanding their friendly indications, they had, nevertheless, signed a treaty with his enemy, received them with the greatest courtesy: and, as they were profuse in their professions of amity, he suddenly required of them a proof; —it was to lend him the diamonds they then wore. The two regents could but obey a request which possessed all the characteristics of a command. They took off their collars, rings, and earrings, for which Charles gave them a detailed receipt, and then pledged them for 24,000 ducats. Provided with this money, he advanced towards Asti, of which the Duke of Orleans had retained the sovereignty, and where he was joined by Louis Sforza and his father-in-law the Duke of Ferrara. They brought with them not only the troops and money agreed upon, but a court also, composed of the handsomest ladies of Italy. Balls, festivals, and tourneys then commenced with a magnificence which surpassed any thing previously witnessed in Italy.

But these were suddenly interrupted by the illness of the king. This the first indication in Italy of that infection, brought by Columbus from the new world, called by the Italians the French, by the French the Italian, disease. The greater probability is, that a part of the crew of Columbus, then at Genoa or in its environs, had already introduced from America that strange and cruel *equivalent* for its mines of gold. Restored to health at the expiration of a few weeks, Charles advanced to Pavia, whither, in a dying state, proceeded also the young Duke John Galeasso. The King of France and he were cousins-german, both sons of two sisters of the house of Savoy. He could not accordingly avoid an interview, and went, therefore, to the castle in which he resided, far more as a prisoner, than as its lord. He found him half recumbent upon a couch, pale and exhausted by voluptuous habits, according to some; a victim of a slow and mortal poison, according to others. But how great soever his desire to obtain redress, the poor youth dared not address the king, for his uncle Louis Sforza did not for one instant quit his presence. But at the moment when Charles arose to depart, a door opened and a graceful woman in the bloom of youth appeared, who threw herself at his feet; it was the wife of the unfortunate John Galeasso, who earnestly supplicated him to abandon his designs against Alfonso and his brother Ferdinand. Upon this the brow of Sforza became contracted, gloomy, and menacing, as of one uncertain what impression this might produce on his ally; but he was soon reassured. Charles replied that it was now too late to retract, that it concerned the glory of his name, and the interest of his kingdom; motives too important to be sacrificed to any feeling of pity, however earnest and sincere. The unhappy wife whose last hope rested on this attempt rose, and threw herself sobbing into the arms of her husband; Charles VIII. and Louis Sforza departed. The fate of John Galeasso was sealed.

The third day after this occurrence, Charles advanced towards Florence, accompanied by his ally, but they had hardly reached Parma before a messenger arrived, and announced to Louis Sforza the death of his nephew. Louis expressed his regret, that he must now leave the king to continue his journey alone, but the events which recalled him to Milan were of such import, he said, that his presence under the circumstances could not longer be delayed. It was true; he went to inherit the succession of the man he had murdered. Charles nevertheless continued his march, though not without inquietude. The sight of the dying prince had deeply affected him; he was strongly impressed with the conviction that Louis had caused his death, and he felt that an assassin could become a traitor. His way lay through a country with which he was unacquainted; before him an avowed enemy, upon his rear a doubtful friend; they were entering the mountainous defiles; where, as the army was not regularly provisioned, but subsisted on the day's supply, the slightest check might cause a famine. Before them was Fivizzano; merely a small fortified town, it is true, but behind them rose the fortresses of Sarzana and Pietra Santa, which were considered impregnable; and in addition they were traversing a country at all times unwholesome, more particularly so in October, the only product of which was oil, obtaining its corn even from the neighbouring districts; thus the entire army might be in a few days destroyed by malaria and want, even more readily than by the facilities of attack, which every step of ground offered to an opponent. The situation was perilous; but the pride of Pietro de Medici again freed Charles from his embarrassments. Pietro had engaged, as has been stated, to defend Tuscany against the French, but relying less confidently upon his own troops, as he witnessed their descent of the Alps, he demanded succours from the pope. The rumour, however, of this ultramontane invasion had been scarcely bruited about Romagna, than the Colonnas raised their standard in the name of the King of France, and collecting all their forces, made themselves masters of Ostia, where they awaited the French fleet in order to offer him a passage towards Rome. Thus the pope, instead of despatching troops to Florence, was obliged to recall his forces around his capital; he therefore merely promised Pietro, that if Bajazet sent him the troops he had solicited, he would immediately place them at his disposal. Pietro de Medici was still irresolute and undecided, when he learnt that the Marquis of Tordinovo had betrayed to the French the unprotected side of Fivizzano, so that the French had carried it by storm, and had put the garrison and inhabitants to the sword; whilst about the same time Gilbert de Montpensier, who watched the coast, to keep open the communications between the army and the fleet, had encountered a detachment sent by Paul Orsini to reinforce the garrison at Sarzana, and had cut it to pieces. Quarter had been resolutely refused; and all the fugitives they could overtake were massacred.

This was the first time that the Italians, accustomed to the chivalrous combats of the fifteenth century, had met the fierce ultramontanes, who, less civilized than themselves, had not yet learnt to consider war as a game of skill, but really as the shock of mortal strife. The news therefore of these two butcheries caused a great sensation at Florence: every citizen depicted to himself the French army as similar to those hordes of ancient barbarians, who extinguished fire with blood; and the prophecies of Savonarola, who had predicted this invasion, and the terrible consequences which would ensue, being now recited, so great an excitement prevailed, that Pietro, resolved to obtain peace at all hazards, procured a decree of the republic, that ambassadors should be sent to the conqueror with the secret determination of being joined with them, and of submitting himself entirely to the will of the king. He consequently quitted Florence with four more deputies, and on reaching Pietra Santa, he demanded of Charles a safe conduct for himself. The following day Briçonnet and De Piennes arrived there, and brought him before Charles. Notwithstanding his name and influence, in the eyes of the French nobility, who considered it a dishonour to be engaged in any lucrative pursuit, Pietro de Medici was but a wealthy merchant, with whom it was needless to be on much ceremony. Charles received him, therefore, on horseback, and demanded in the haughty tone of a master to his inferior, from whom and whence he derived the arrogance that had encouraged him to dare to dispute his advance into Tuscany? Pietro de Medici replied, that with the full consent of Louis XI., his father Lorenzo had concluded a treaty of alliance with Ferdinand of Naples, that he therefore had been compelled to adhere to pre-existing engagements; but unwilling to carry this devotion to the house of Arragon to excess, in opposition to that of France, he was prepared to accept whatever terms the king might dictate. Unprepared for so much humility from his enemy, the king demanded the cession of Sarzana, with which Pietro immediately complied. The conqueror then, as if anxious to ascertain the limits of this deferential submission of the ambassador of the high and mighty republic, replied, that this concession was far from sufficient;

that in addition he must possess Pietra Santa, Pisa, Librafetta, and Leghorn. Pietro consented with equal facility to this also, upon one single guarantee, the promise of Charles, that these cities should be restored to the republic, when he had completed the conquest of the kingdom of Naples. Lastly, Charles, perceiving that the ambassador, who had been deputed to him, was so ductile and submissive, exacted as a final condition, but also as the *sine quâ non* of his royal protection, that the republic should lend him a sum of two hundred thousand florins.

Pietro, who disposed of the treasure of the republic with as much ease as of its fortresses, replied that his fellow-citizens would be proud to be enabled thus to assist their new ally. Charles thereupon desired him to mount his horse, and directed him to go before and commence the fulfilment of his engagements by the cession of the fortresses he had named. Pietro obeyed, and the French army, conducted by the grandson of Cosmo the Great, and the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, continued its triumphal march across the plains of Tuscany. Arriving at Lucca, Pietro learnt that the concessions he had made to the king had occasioned the greatest excitement at Florence. The republic had limited the probable demands of Charles to a free passage through its territory: the discontent was therefore general upon the news of the conduct of Pietro, and this was increased upon the arrival of the ambassadors, whom he had not even condescended to consult in the negotiations. For himself, thinking his return requisite, he demanded of Charles permission to precede his arrival. As he had fulfilled all his engagements, except the loan, and as the terms of this could be negotiated only in Florence, the king consented, and the same evening Pietro re-entered his palace in the Via Larga.

On the following morning he was anxious to meet the senate, but, on arriving at the place Del Vecchio Palazzo, the gonfalonier, Jacob de Nerli, advanced to meet him, and pointed to Lucas Corsini standing at its gates, with his sword drawn, and having behind him the city guards, prepared, if requisite, to prevent his entrance. Pietro was astonished at this unexpected opposition, but did not even attempt its repression. He returned home, and wrote to Paolo Orsini, his brother-in-law, to join him with his soldiers. Unfortunately for him, this letter was intercepted, and the senate saw in it an attempt at rebellion. They called upon the citizens for aid; these, hastily armed, rushed in crowds, and assembled before the square of the palace. In the mean time the Cardinal Giovanni de Medici had mounted on horseback, and believing that Orsini was prepared to support him, he traversed the streets, accompanied by his retainers, shouting his war-cry, "Palle, palle!" But it was in vain; the cry was not reechoed, and when the cardinal reached the street De Calzaioli, it was received with such murmurs, that he saw at once that, instead of endeavouring to excite Florence in his behalf, his most politic course would be to quit the city before the excitement was at its height. He retreated, therefore, immediately to his palace, expecting to meet there his brothers Pietro and Julian; but they, protected by Orsini, had already left Florence by the gate of San Gallo. The danger was extreme; Giovanni de Medici sought to follow their example, but wherever he appeared the clamours of the citizens became each moment more menacing. At last, perceiving that the danger increased at every step, he dismounted, and took refuge in a house, the door of which was open. It communicated fortunately with a convent of Franciscans, one of the brothers of which lent his robe to the fugitive, and, protected by this humble disguise, he escaped, and rejoined his brothers on the Apennines. On the same day the republic proclaimed the Medici to be traitors and rebels, and sent another embassy to the King of France. They found him at Pisa, where he restored the freedom of the city, which for eighty-seven years had been under the dominion of Florence. Charles the Eighth gave no reply to the messengers of the republic, but merely signified his intention to advance immediately to Florence. Such a reply, as may be supposed, occasioned extreme alarm. Florence had no forces ready for its defence, nor time to raise them; nevertheless, every powerful family assembled its servants and vassals, and having armed them, awaited the arrival of the French, resolved not to commence hostilities, but determined to defend themselves to the uttermost, if attacked.

It was agreed upon, that if necessity exacted a general levy, the tolling of the bells from the various churches should be the signal. The palaces which remain of that period are still in every respect so many fortresses, and the incessant contests of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines had familiarised the Tuscans with street warfare. On the 17th of November the king arrived at the gate of San Friano; he found there the nobility of Florence, magnificently dressed, accompanied by the clergy, singing hymns, and surrounded by the populace, who, pleased at the prospect of all change, hoped to obtain also some concessions of their former freedom by the downfal of the Medici. Charles stopped for a few minutes beneath a gilt canopy they had erected for him; then replying in an evasive manner to some expressions of welcome the senate had addressed to him, he called for his lance, which he brought to its rest upon his thigh, and gave orders to enter the city; and traversing this in its entire extent with his army, he dismounted finally at the palace of the Medici, which had been prepared for his reception. The negotiations commenced on the following morning, but with little chance of agreement on either side. The Florentines had received Charles as a guest; he, on the contrary, had entered their city as a conqueror. Thus, when the deputies of the senate spoke of ratifying the treaty of Pietro de Medici, the king replied, it was annulled, since they had expelled the person by whom it had been drawn up; that Florence was his conquest, as he had shown by entering it lance in hand; that he reserved for himself its sovereignty, and should decide according to his good pleasure upon the point; that consequently he would communicate to them whether he should delegate his authority to the senate, or re-establish the Medici; and that, as regarded other points, he would acquaint them with his ultimatum upon the morrow. This answer excited the greatest consternation, nevertheless it only the more confirmed the Florentines in their resolutions of defence. Charles VIII. had been also struck by the extraordinary population of the city, for not only were the streets through which he rode almost impassable for the crowd, but every house, from its terraces to the smallest outlets of its cellars, seemed to swarm with inhabitants. In fact, Florence could, owing to the increase of its population, number nearly one hundred and fifty thousand souls.

On the morrow the deputies obtained audience of the king, and the discussions recommenced; but, as there seemed to be no chance of agreement, the king's secretary, standing at the foot of the throne, where

Charles was seated, produced a paper, and commenced reading, article by article, the conditions granted by Charles to the republic; but one third of this was scarcely read before the debates became still more violent, and Charles, having threatened that unless these terms were ratified, he would sound the trumpets and assemble his troops, Pietro Capponi, the secretary of the republic, and who was called the Scipio of Florence, snatched from the hands of the king's secretary the shameful capitulation he proposed, and tearing it in pieces, exclaimed, "Be it so then, sire; sound your trumpets; we will ring our bells." Then, throwing the fragments of the capitulation in the face of the astonished secretary, he rushed from the chamber, to give the fearful order that was to change the fair city of Florence into a field of battle.

Contrary to all expectation this bold conduct saved the city. The French thought that the utterance of so bold a threat was not mere gasconade, but that the Florentines possessed secret resources upon which they could rely; and as some of the more influential councillors of Charles advised him to abate his proposals, Charles consented to offer more reasonable terms, which were accepted and proclaimed on the 26th of November, in the cathedral of Santa Maria dei Fiori. The terms were as follow: That the senate should pay to Charles VIII., as a subsidy, the sum of one hundred and twenty thousand florins, in three sums; should rescind the sequestration placed upon the property of the Medici, and revoke the decree which placed a price upon their heads; should publish an amnesty for all political offences as regarded Pisa, on account of which the Pisans should renew their allegiance to Florence; and, lastly, should admit the claims of the Duke of Milan upon Saryana and Pietra Santa, but that these should be referred to future arbitration. In consideration of which, the king engaged to restore the other fortresses, of which he was in possession, either upon the capture of Naples or upon the conclusion of the war, by peace, or truce, for two years, or upon his quitting Italy, for any reason he might assign.

Two days after the announcement of this treaty, Charles, to the great joy of the senate, quitted Florence, and advanced towards Rome by way of Poggibondi and Sienna. The pope now shared in the general consternation: he was aware of the massacres of Fivizzano, of Lunigiano, and of Imola, that Pietro de' Medici had surrendered the fortresses of Tuscany, that Florence had capitulated, and Catherine Sforza had negotiated with the conqueror; he daily saw the dispirited Neapolitan soldiers passing through Rome to fall back upon the Abruzzi, so that whilst thus unprotected, the French army advanced towards him, master of the entire extent of the Romagna, and stretching in one line from Piombino to Ancona.

It was about this time that Alexander received the reply of Bajazet, delayed in consequence of the ambassadors having been detained by Giovanni de la Rovere, brother of the Cardinal Julian, upon their landing at Sinigaglia. They were bearers of a verbal answer to his holiness; that the emperor being then at war with the King of Hungary, the Sultan of Egypt, and the Greeks of Macedon and Epirus, could not, in spite of his sincere desire, then aid him with his army. They were accompanied also by a favourite of the sultan, the bearer of a private letter, in which upon certain conditions Bajazet offered to aid Alexander the Sixth by a subsidy. The despatch was to the following effect. After the recital of the titles of Bajazet, and the customary felicitations to the pope—"Your envoy Bucciarda having stated to us, that the King of France, who is now at war with your holiness, has expressed a wish that our brother Djem, now in your charge, should be transferred to his protection, we think it due to you to state, that not only is this in direct opposition to our will, but that it would be followed by events equally prejudicial to your holiness and to Christianity. Reflecting therefore upon this circumstance in conjunction with your envoy, we are of opinion, that it would be well for the repose, the interests, and the honour even of the Holy See, and at the same time for our personal satisfaction, that our brother Djem, who as a man is subject to death, should be put to death with the least unnecessary delay; seeing that, situated as he is, this would be happiness to him, most serviceable to your holiness, favourable to the preservation of peace, and highly satisfactory to me, your friend. And if, as we trust, this proposal should be welcomed by your holiness, it would be better in such case, that it should be hastened rather than delayed; and that, by the surest means it may please your holiness to employ, our brother Djem should be freed from the pains of this world, and enter into the tranquil joys of another in which he will find repose. And should your holiness adopt this plan, and deliver to us the body of our brother, we, the Sultan Bajazet, engage on our parts to remit to whatever place, and to whomsoever you may appoint, the sum of three hundred thousand ducats, which we further engage to place in the hands of a third party, to the intent, that your holiness may be assured of their receipt on the day appointed consequent upon the delivery of the body of our brother. Moreover, I promise, for the more complete satisfaction of your holiness, that so long as you shall occupy the throne of the pontiff, that neither by me, my compatriots, or retainers, shall any injury be offered or done unto the Christians, whatever their condition, upon land or sea; and to the end that no doubt may arise, as to the full and entire accomplishment of the stipulations here made, I have sworn, and attested in the presence of your envoy Bucciarda, upon the gospels of the true God whom we adore, that item by item they shall be observed, from the first even unto the last; and now, at this present, for your more complete security, that no doubt may linger upon your mind, I, the undersigned Sultan Bajazet, swear by the one true God, who created the heaven and the earth, and all that therein is, to observe religiously the engagement here made, and neither to conceive, or undertake aught in future against the welfare or interest of your holiness. Written at Constantinople, in our palace, the 1t2h September, 1494."

His holiness read this missive with the greatest satisfaction; the aid of four or five thousand Turks had become ineffectual in the existing state of affairs, and would only tend the more to compromise the spiritual head of the Christian world, whilst three hundred thousand ducats was a sum highly advantageous to receive under any circumstances whatever. It is true, that during the life of Djem, Alexander enjoyed an annuity of sixty thousand, representing a capital of nearly six hundred thousand; but the want of ready money made him willing to submit to a sacrifice. Nevertheless, Alexander postponed the acceptance of the terms, and resolved to be guided by the course of events. The most urgent point for his decision, was the policy he should pursue with regard to the King of France. His success was unexpected; and Alexander, as we have seen, had based the future greatness of his family upon his alliance with the house of Arragon. But the throne of Arragon was tottering, and a volcano more terrible than Vesuvius threatened to destroy Naples. It was necessary, therefore, to abandon his former plans, and to combine his interests with those of the King of France; a matter not easily accomplished, for Charles still highly resented the investiture he had granted the house of Arragon. He therefore sent the Cardinal Francis Piccolomini to the king. This selection of the envoy seemed at the first glance impolitic, inasmuch as the cardinal was the nephew of Pope Pius II., who had strenuously opposed the house of Anjou; but Alexander was influenced by motives which those around him could not fathom. He foresaw that Charles would not readily grant an audience to the cardinal, and that in the conferences which must thereupon ensue, he must of necessity be brought much in contact with those who chiefly influenced the king. Now, apart from his ostensible mission to Charles, Piccolomini had secret instructions for his principal ministers. These were Briçonnet and Philippe de Luxenbourg, to whom the envoy was empowered to promise the cardinal's hat. It occurred as Alexander had foreseen; the envoy, refused an audience, was obliged to confer with the councillors. This was precisely what the pope desired. Piccolomini returned to Rome, with the refusal of the king, but with the promise of Briçonnet and Philippe de Luxembourg, to exert all their influence in the pope's behalf, and to induce the king to receive another envoy.

In the mean time, the French continued to advance, never remaining more than forty-eight hours in any city; so that it became hourly more urgent to enter into arrangements with Charles. The king had entered Sienna and Viterbo without resistance. Yves d'Alegre and Louis de Ligney had obtained possession of Ostia from the Colonnas; Civita Vecchia and Corneto had opened their gates; the Orsini had submitted; and Giovanni Sforza had retired also from the Arragonese alliance. Alexander considered it was now time to abandon his ally, and sent therefore the bishops of Concordia, of Terni, and his confessor, to the king. They were empowered to renew the promise made to Briçonnet, and to Louis de Luxembourg, and had full powers to negotiate in their master's name, whether Charles wished to include Alfonso in the treaty, or was bent on signing no engagement but with the pope. They found Charles fluctuating between the insinuations of Julian de la Rovere, who, as witness of the simony of the pope, urged the assembly of a council to effect his deposition, and the secret support and protection of the bishops of Mans and of St. Malo; so that the king, decided upon making himself acquainted with the facts without prejudging the case, continued his route, and dismissed the ambassadors, in company with the Maréchal de Gie, the Seneschal de Beaucaire, and Jean de Gannay, first president of the parliament of Paris, who were charged to acquaint the pontiff, that the king was above all things anxious to enter Rome without resistance; that on condition of this voluntary, frank, and loyal admission, he would respect the authority of his holiness, and the privileges of the church; that the king desired that Djem should be delivered up to him, in order that he might be made available against the sultan when he should carry the war either to Macedonia, Turkey, or the Holy Land; that, as for the other conditions, they were unimportant and might be arranged at the first conference. The ambassadors added, that the French army was only two days' march from Rome, at the expiration of which time the king would probably himself arrive to receive the answer of the pope.

Negotiations were of no avail with a prince of such resolute activity. Alexander, therefore, intimated to Ferdinand, that, for his own safety, it was desirable that he should instantly quit Rome. To this, however, he would not listen, and declared that he would leave it by one gate only when Charles should enter by another. But his departure was not long delayed. Two days afterwards, about eleven in the morning, a sentinel placed on the watch upon the castle of St. Angelo exclaimed, that he saw the vanguard of the French army slowly emerging from the horizon. Alexander and the Duke of Calabria immediately ascended the terrace which commands the fortress, and ascertained the truth of the alarm. Then only did the Duke of Calabria depart, leaving Rome by the gate of San Sebastiano at the instant when the vanguard of the French halted within five hundred paces from the gate Del Popolo. It was the 31st of December, 1494. At three in the afternoon, being joined by the main body, the advanced guard of the army recommenced its march, with drums beating and colours flying, consisting, according to Paulus Jovius (lib. ii., p. 41 of his history), of the Swiss and Germans, clothed in short tight surcoats of various colours, armed with the old Roman double-edged sword, and carrying ashen lances ten feet in length, the heads of which were narrow and sharp-pointed. A fourth part only of these bore, instead of lances, halberds in the form of a hatchet, fitted either to cut or thrust. The first ranks of each battalion wore helmets and cuirasses, which defended the head and chest, so that when in battle the soldiers presented to the enemy a triple row of lances, which rose and fell as the quills of a porcupine. To every thousand soldiers a company of one hundred fusiliers was attached, and the commanders wore lofty plumes in their helmets, to distinguish them from the privates. Following these came the crossbowmen of Gascony, whose plain uniform was strongly contrasted with that of the Swiss, to whom also they seemed comparatively diminutive; these were five thousand strong, excellent soldiers, active and courageous, and highly valued for their rapidity and skill in the use of the crossbow. The cavalry next advanced, the *élite* of the French nobility, with their glittering helmets and collars, and surcoats of velvet and of silk; their swords, each bearing a name; their shields, each representing a noble house; and their colours, each emblematic of some chivalrous lady-love. Besides his defensive weapons, every cavalier carried a mace at his saddlebow, either plated on all sides or covered with spikes. Their horses were large and powerful, and, according to the prevalent custom, had their ears and tails docked; but, unlike those of the Italians, they had not leathern defensive armour, and were therefore more exposed in the charge. Every cavalier was attended by a page and two esquires, who fought always on the right and left hand of their liege lord. Thus they formed not only the most splendid, but the most numerous body of soldiers in the army, amounting, with their attendants, to ten thousand men. Five thousand light horse succeeded, armed with bows, and, like the English archers, discharging their long arrows at a distance. They were the most useful auxiliaries in battle; for they could be brought rapidly to any quarter of the field, from one wing to another, to the van or rear, pour in their flight of arrows, and, their quivers being exhausted, retire at full gallop, exposed to no danger of pursuit from the infantry or heavy horse. The defensive armour was the helmet and hauberk; some in addition carried a javelin, to transfix an opponent if unhorsed; all wore long cloaks, ornamented with aiguillettes and the armorial bearings of their leaders, emblazoned on plates of silver. The king's body-guard closed the long array: it consisted of four hundred archers, of whom one hundred were Scotch; whilst two hundred of the most illustrious knights, bearing heavy maces upon their shoulders, marched on foot by his side. Charles, in rich armour, and his horse splendidly accoutred, advanced amid this cohort, accompanied on his right and left by the cardinals Ascanio Sforza, brother of the Duke of Milan, and Julian de la Rovere, who was subsequently Pope Julius the Second. The cardinals Colonna and Savelli were next seen, and behind them Prosper and Fabrizio Colonna, and the several petty princes and Italian generals who had sided with the king. The crowd which had assembled to witness the march of these troops, fearful alike to them from their numbers and strange armour, had remarked also, and with great anxiety, a heavy sound, every moment increasing, and advancing like a rolling peal of thunder; soon the earth seemed to tremble, the windows shook in their casements, and, as the escort of the king defiled, thirty-six brass cannons, each drawn by six horses, were seen closing the rear. These were eight feet in length, their bores large enough to admit a man's head, and the weight of each was estimated at about six thousand pounds. The culverins and falconets, the former sixteen feet in length, the latter adapted for balls of the size of a grenade, followed, forming an artillery entirely unknown to the Italians, and the effect of which was increased at once by their astonishment and fears.

Six hours had elapsed from the time of the entrance of the advanced guard into Rome, and night closed in ere the artillery had passed, and as one of the six artillerymen attached to each gun bore a torch, the lurid uncertain light gave to the objects on which it fell an appearance far more gloomy and threatening than they would have presented by day. The young king alighted at the Venetian palace; the artillery was arranged and pointed upon the square and streets adjacent, and the rest of the army was quartered in the different districts of the city. The same evening, far more as a token of respect than to ease his mind of any fears as to his personal safety, the keys of Rome and those of the gates of the garden of the Belvedere, were presented to the king, And the same ceremony, it may be observed, had taken place with the Duke of Calabria. The pope, as before stated, had retired to the castle of St. Angelo with a retinue only of six cardinals; so that on the following morning the young king found himself surrounded by a court very different, both in numbers and appearance, from that of the spiritual head of the church. The question as to the propriety of summoning a council, which, convicting Alexander of simony, should next proceed to his deposition, was again taken into consideration. But the councillors of the king, bribed as we have seen by the promises of the pope, observed that the period was exceedingly inopportune for this discussion, as it would tend to excite a new schism in the church at the very moment when they were preparing to march against the infidels. As this coincided with the king's opinion, there was not much difficulty in convincing him of its propriety, and it was finally agreed to enter into negotiations with his holiness. Scarcely, however, were these commenced when they were suspended, for the first stipulation on the part of Charles was the surrender of the castle of St. Angelo; which, on the other hand, the pope, considering its retention to be his sole security, was determined to refuse. Thrice in his impetuosity the king was resolved to obtain by force what was refused to his demand, and levelled the artillery at the gates of the castle of St. Angelo; but the pope was unmoved by any such demonstration, and obstinate as he was, this time the King of France gave way. That article was, therefore, abandoned, and they agreed upon the following terms:—That between his majesty the King of France, and his holiness the pope, a sincere friendship and firm alliance should thenceforth exist.

That, until the definitive conquest of the kingdom of Naples, the King of France should occupy the fortresses of Civita Vecchia, of Terracina, and of Spoleto.

Lastly, that the Cardinal Valentino (this was Cesar Borgia, designated from his archbishopric of Valencia) should accompany the king, Charles VIII., as the apostolic legate, or rather as an hostage, for the fulfilment of the above conditions.

These terms concluded, they next regulated the ceremonial of the interview. The king left the Venetian palace, and went to reside at the Vatican. At an appointed hour he entered by one door the garden belonging to the palace; whilst the pope, who had not quitted the castle of St. Angelo, descended into it by another. The result of this arrangement was, that the king instantly perceived the pope, and bent his knee for the first time; but the pope feigned not to see him, whereupon the king advanced a few steps and repeated the ceremony; but as his holiness was then half concealed by a plantation, here was an additional excuse: and thus the king, strictly observing the ceremony, again arose, was about to kneel for the third time, when his holiness, fortunately seeing him, hastened forward as if to prevent it, removed his cap, embraced him, and, raising him, kissed his forehead, and would not consent to be himself covered until the king put on his cap, which Alexander assisted him to do. After a short interval and the interchange of some expressions of courtesy and friendship, the king requested that his holiness would be pleased to collate to the sacred college Guillaume Briçonnet, bishop of St. Malo. Although a previous understanding had existed between that prelate and Alexander, yet as the king was ignorant of this, the pope still wished to have the merit of readily conceding this request, and ordered, therefore, one of his attendants to obtain immediately from his nephew, the Cardinal Valentino, a mantle and cap. Then taking the king's hand, the pope led him into the adjoining hall where the ceremony of admitting the new cardinal took place. The form of taking the oath of obedience was deferred until the morrow. On that day all the wealth and grandeur of Rome, as reflected in her nobility, clergy, and military rank, was assembled around his holiness, whilst Charles VIII. proceeded at the same time to the Vatican with a splendid suite of prelates, princes, and noble commanders. At the palace he was met by four cardinals, two placed themselves on each side, the others immediately behind him. With this retinue he traversed a long succession of apartments lined with guards and attendants, until finally he entered the presence-chamber where the pope was seated upon his throne, behind which stood Cesar Borgia. Upon reaching the door the king complied with the customary ceremonials of kneeling, kissing the feet, the hand, and forehead of the pontiff; then rising, he stood, whilst the president of the parliament of Paris advancing a few steps, thus addressed his holiness:—"You behold here, most holy father, my king, who is wholly inclined to take that oath of obedience to you which is due, but it is customary in France that he who tenders his vassalage to his lord obtains also the concession of such acts of favour as he may demand. His majesty, therefore, though well resolved to exercise towards your holiness a kingly munificence far exceeding its return, yet now asks the immediate concession of three acts of grace. These are, first, the confirmation of all privileges already granted to the king, the queen his wife, and to the dauphin, his son. Secondly, the investiture for himself and his successors of the kingdom of Naples; and thirdly, the delivery to him of Sultan Djem, the brother of the emperor of the Turks."

The pope was for a moment stupified at these demands, which Charles had thus publicly made, to deprive him of all opportunity for their refusal. But quickly recovering his presence of mind, he replied that he would willingly confirm all privileges granted to the house of France by his predecessors; that as for the investiture of the kingdom of Naples, it was a matter for deliberation in the council of the cardinals, but that he would do every thing in his power to influence the decision in his favour; and that, as regarded the brother of the sultan, he would refer the consideration of the subject at some more fitting period to the sacred college; but, as this demand could not but be of advantage to the general interests of Christianity, as it was preferred solely in the desire of bringing a crusade to a successful issue, he assured the king that it would be his earnest wish to obtain, on this point also, the concession he required. Upon this Charles inclined himself to indicate his satisfaction; and, still standing uncovered before the pope, the president renewed his discourse. "It is an ancient custom, most holy Father, of Christian kings, more particularly the most Christian kings of France, to express through their ambassadors the respect they entertain for the holy see, and for the sovereign pontiffs, whom Divine Providence raises to that eminence. But the most Christian king, desirous of visiting the tombs of the Holy Apostles, has sought, not by his ambassador, nor by any delegate, but in person, to acquit himself of this religious duty; a duty which possesses a sacred character in his opinion. And therefore is it, most holy father, that his majesty recognises in you the true Vicar of Christ, the legitimate successor of the Holy Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, and promises and vows to you, that filial, reverential faith and obedience which the kings, his forefathers, have been wont to vow, devoting himself and the power of his kingdom to the service of your holiness, and the interests of the holy see."

The pope arose with every feeling of satisfaction; for this oath, so publicly taken, disburdened his mind of all fears of a council, and inclined him from that moment towards a full concession of all the king could claim. He took, therefore, his left hand, making a short and friendly reply, and addressing him as the eldest son of the church. The ceremony over, they quitted the presence-chamber, the pope still retaining the king's hand, and thus they walked until they arrived at the room where the sacred robes are kept; upon reaching which, the pope feigned a desire to reconduct the king to his apartments, but Charles not permitting this, they again saluted each other and retired.

The king's departure was delayed for eight days, during which his demands were discussed and decided to his satisfaction. The bishop of Mans was made cardinal; the investiture of the kingdom of Naples was promised to the conqueror; and, finally, it was agreed, that the pope should deliver Djem to the care of the King of France, in consideration of a sum of 120,000 livres only. Wishing, however, to extend to the uttermost his hospitality, the pope invited Djem to dine with him on the day of his departure from Rome, under the charge of his new protector. On the day of his departure, Charles, surrounded by a brilliant and numerous escort, repaired to the Vatican; on reaching the entrance he dismounted, and leaving his attendants in the place of St. Peter, he entered it with only a few noblemen of his suite. The pope received him with the accustomed honours; on his right hand was the Cardinal Valentino, on his left Djem, and about him were thirteen cardinals. The king having first bent the knee, craved the benediction of his holiness, and inclined himself as if to kiss his feet; but Alexander, preventing this action, embraced him, and with the lips of a father and the heart of an enemy, kissed him tenderly on the forehead. He next introduced to the king the son of Mahomet the Second, a noble-looking youth, the richness of whose oriental robes contrasted strongly with the close and simpler costume of the Christians. Djem met the king without humility, yet without pride; and as the son of an emperor, who discourses with a king, he kissed his hand and his shoulder; then turning towards his holiness, he besought his recommendation to the monarch who had taken him under his protection, assuring the pontiff he should never regret having given him his liberty, and expressing to the king his hope to have reason to be thankful to him if, after the capture of Naples, he carried the war into Greece, as he proposed. These words were uttered with so much dignity and gentleness, that the king extended his hand to the sultan with frank cordiality, as to a companion in arms. After this, Charles for the last time took leave of the pope, and rejoined his escort. He then awaited the arrival of the Cardinal Valentino, who was to accompany him as an hostage, but who yet lingered in conversation with his father. Cesar soon arrived, mounted upon a mule in splendid trappings, having behind six beautiful led horses—a present from the pope to the king. Charles mounted immediately upon one of these to testify his appreciation of the gift, and quitting Rome with the remainder of his army, arrived the same evening at Marino.

He was there informed that Alphonso, false to his reputation, both as a skilful politician and a great general, had embarked with all his treasures in a flotilla of four galleys, leaving the conduct of the war, and the government of his kingdom, to his son Ferdinand. Thus every circumstance favoured the triumphant progress of Charles; the cities surrendered as he advanced, his enemies fled without resistance, and, without a single battle, he had already won the title of conqueror. The next morning at sunrise the army continued its march, and arrived in the evening at Velletri. The king, who had been on horseback the whole day, accompanied by the cardinal and Djem, quitted the former at his quarters, and proceeded with the latter to his palace. Cesar in the mean time had directed his attendants to remove from one of the twenty heavily-laden waggons which accompanied the baggage of the army the magnificent service of plate he was accustomed to use, and to prepare supper. In the mean time, night having closed in, he retired to a private chamber, and there divesting himself of his cardinal's dress, he put on that of a groom. By favour of this disguise he left his quarters unrecognised, traversed rapidly the streets, and regained the open country. At a short distance from the city a servant awaited him with two fleet horses, and retaking immediately the road towards Rome, he arrived there with his companion at break of day. He dismounted at the house of M. Flores, the auditor of the rota, and having procured a fresh horse, and laid aside his disguise, he went immediately to his mother, who uttered a cry of joy as she met him; for reserved and taciturn to every one, even to her, the cardinal had concealed the design of his speedy return to Rome.

The cry of joy which Vanozza uttered was far less of love than of revenge. One evening, during the festivities of the Vatican, whilst Charles and Alexander were indulging in those lip professions of friendship which were far from the heart of either, a messenger arrived from Vanozza, requiring the immediate presence of Cesar, at her house in the street Della Sengara. Cesar questioned the messenger, but in vain; he was told that what he desired to know his mother would relate. He, therefore, immediately proceeded to her, dressed in a layman's habit, and wrapped in a large mantle. On approaching the house he was struck by the signs of recent tumult it presented. The street was strewed with broken fragments of furniture and remnants of rich draperies. Around the entrance he remarked that the windows were broken, before which the half-destroyed curtains still fluttered in the wind; every thing bore the marks of plunder and of riot; so that, unable to comprehend its cause, he rushed into the house, passing through various apartments, all deserted and ransacked. At last, guided by a light in one chamber, he entered, and found his mother seated on the remains of an ebony chest, which had been richly inlaid with ivory and silver. As Cesar entered, she rose, her face pale, her hair disordered, and pointing with her hand to the confusion around, she exclaimed, "Behold, Cesar! Behold the work of your new friends." "What means this?" demanded the cardinal. "Whence arises this disorder?" "It means," replied Vanozza, and her face was livid with rage; "it means, that the serpent that you have warmed has stung me, fearing doubtless to break its fangs on you." "Who has done this?" exclaimed Cesar. "Name him, and I swear to you by Heaven! this injury shall be tenfold repaid?" "Who has done this?" she answered, "the king, Charles VIII. of France, by the agency of his most faithful allies the Swiss. It was known Melchior was absent, and consequently that I was protected only by a few miserable servants; therefore came they, bursting the doors as if they had stormed Rome; and whilst the Cardinal Valentino was feasting their master, they pillaged his mother's house, overwhelming her with outrages and insults, unexpected even from the worst barbarians of the Turks and Saracens." "It is well! it is well!" he replied. "Be composed. Blood will wash out the stains of shame. As to our loss, remember it is nothing in comparison to what we risked, and my father and I will restore far more than you have lost." "I ask not promises, it is revenge that I require," she replied. "Mother," said the cardinal, "you shall be avenged, or I will forfeit the name of son."

Having reassured her by these words, he conducted her to the palace of Lucretia, and returned to the Vatican, whence he gave orders for the immediate restoration of his mother's house to more than its former splendour. It was amid this luxury, with an unabated feeling of hatred in her heart, that Cesar met his mother. They exchanged but a few words, and Cesar then returned to the Vatican, which he had left but two days before as an hostage. Alexander, preinformed of his intended flight, had not only approved it, but moreover as sovereign pontiff, had absolved his son from the guilt of his perjury; he received him, therefore, with joy, but advised concealment, as Charles in all probability would not delay to claim him at his hands. In fact, on the morning following, his flight was soon discovered; and Charles, uneasy on account of his non-appearance, sent to inquire as to its cause. He was informed that Cesar had left his quarters at nine o'clock the night previous, and had not since returned. Charles immediately suspected he had fled, and in the first excitement of his anger proclaimed this act of perjury to the army.

The soldiers, recollecting the twenty waggons so heavily laden, from one of which the cardinal had publicly taken the magnificent service of gold and silver, immediately broke them to pieces, not doubting they contained articles of equal value; they were mistaken, they found there only sand and stones, which proved that his flight had been prearranged, and redoubled the king's anger against the pope. He despatched upon this Philippe de Bresse, afterwards Duke of Savoy, to Rome, and commanded him to express his extreme dissatisfaction at the conduct of his son. But the pope replied that he was in every respect ignorant of his flight, for which he expressed the sincerest regret, averring that he knew not where he was, but at all events that he was not in Rome. The pope spoke truth, inasmuch as Cesar had retired with the Count Orsino to one of his estates, where for the present he was concealed. This answer was conveyed to Charles by two envoys, the Bishops of Nepi and of Sutri, and the people also sent as on their part, Monsignor Porcari, charged to express to the king their extreme displeasure at this breach of faith. Little disposed as he was to be satisfied by empty expressions, Charles felt that it was requisite to direct his attention to matters of more importance, so he continued without delay his march upon Naples, which he entered the 22d of February, 1493.

Four days afterwards the unhappy Djem, who had sickened at Capua, died at Castel Nuovo. In parting from him, and at the farewell banquet, Alexander had tried upon him the strength of that poison which he proposed hereafter so frequently to employ upon the cardinals, and by the effects of which, as a just retribution, he was himself to perish. Thus, by the success of his double speculation upon the unfortunate youth, he had sold his life for one hundred and twenty thousand livres to Charles VII. and his death for three hundred thousand ducats to Bajazet. But the payment of the last sum was delayed, for it will be remembered that the emperor of the Turks had covenanted to pay the fratricidal gold only upon condition that he received the body of his brother, and this by order of Charles had been buried at Gaëta. When Cesar received this intelligence, he rightly concluded that the king, occupied by the ceremony of his installation in his new capital, had too much to occupy his attention, to permit him to be any longer a matter of interest; he returned, therefore, to Rome, stimulated by the desire of fulfilling his promise to his mother, which he soon evinced by an act of revenge.

The cardinal had in his pay a Spaniard whom he had made the chief of his bravoes; he was a man between thirty-five and forty years of age, whose whole life had been one long outrage against all social laws, recoiling from no action, provided he was rewarded in proportion to its importance.

Don Michel Corregha, who earned for himself a murderer's celebrity under the name of Michelotto, was truly a being fitted for the purposes of Cesar; and thus, whilst Michelotto was entirely devoted to him, Cesar placed an unlimited confidence in his retainer. Don Michel was commanded to overrun the campagna of Rome, and to massacre all the French he should meet with. He applied himself so diligently to the task, that within the lapse of a few days the most satisfactory results were obtained; more than one hundred persons were pillaged and put to death, and among the latter was the son of the cardinal of St. Malo, who was returning to Paris, and upon whom Michelotto found a sum of three thousand crowns. For himself Cesar had reserved the Swiss; for the Swiss it was who had destroyed the house of his mother. The pope at this period had about one hundred and fifty of these in his service, who had settled with their families in Rome, enriched by their pay and other occupations. These the cardinal disbanded, with an order to quit Rome in twenty-four hours, and the Roman states within three days. These unfortunate beings were all assembled, in obedience to an order issued, together with their wives, children, and moveables, in the place of St. Peter, when suddenly the cardinal caused them to be surrounded on all sides by two thousand Spaniards, who commenced a rapid fire upon them, charging at intervals upon the mass with their swords, whilst Cesar and his mother enjoyed the spectacle of the carnage from a window. About fifty or sixty were in this manner butchered; but the remainder, joining in a body, made a bold resistance, and, not allowing themselves to be separated, fought and retreated until they reached a house, which they so valiantly defended that the pope had time to send thither the captain of his guard, who, by the aid of a strong detachment, was enabled to conduct them in safety, to the number of forty, beyond the walls of the city; the rest had fallen in the streets or in the house.

But this was not the revenge that Cesar sought; it reached not Charles the Eighth, the sole author of all the distress and vexation that the pope and his family had experienced. He soon abandoned, therefore, as beneath him, these common plots for designs of greater import, and applied himself with all the energy of his mind to renew the league of the Italian princes, broken by the defection of Sforza, the exile of Pietro, and the overthrow of the king of Naples. This was accomplished with greater facility than the pope expected. The Venetians had witnessed, and not without inquietude, the march of Charles across their immediate territory, and they feared that, once master of Naples, his ambition might prompt the conquest of all Italy. On his part, Ludovico Sforza, observing the rapidity with which the king had dethroned the house of Arragon, was already haunted by the fear that he would soon forget the distinction between his enemies and his friends. Maximilian sought but an opportunity to break the truce he had agreed to, solely on account of the importance of its concessions. Ferdinand and Isabella were connected with the dethroned prince. Thus all, however widely separated by motives of self-interest, were yet united by one common fear, and all were agreed upon the necessity of driving Charles from Naples and from Italy, and engaged by every means in their power, negotiation, surprise, or force, to contribute to this result. The Florentines alone declined to take part in this raising of bucklers, and remained faithful to their engagements.

CHAPTER IV.

According to the articles agreed to by the confederates, the alliance was to exist for twenty-five years, and its ostensible object was to defend the majesty of the Roman pontiff and the interests of Christianity; so that it would have had all the appearance of a league against the Turks if the ambassador of Bajazet had not constantly attended their meetings, although the Christian princes had not yet ventured to enrol the name of the Emperor of Constantinople among their own. In furtherance of their design they were bound to levy an army of four thousand horse and twenty thousand foot; and each was to supply his contingent—the pope four thousand horse, Maximilian six thousand, the King of Spain, the Duke of Milan, and the republic of Venice, each eight thousand. Each contracting power was bound also to raise and equip, within six weeks from the signature of the treaty, four thousand foot-soldiers. The fleets were to be supplied by the maritime powers, but their expenses were to be equally defrayed by all.

This league was proclaimed on the 12th of April, 1493, through all the states of Italy, amid, and this particularly at Rome, festivals and public rejoicings. Immediately upon the publication of its apparent design, the confederates commenced the fulfilment of its secret articles. Ferdinand and Isabella were engaged to send to Ischia, whither the son of Alphonso had fled, a fleet of sixty galleys, carrying six hundred horse and five thousand foot, to assist in the recovery of his throne. These troops were to be placed under the command of Gonsalvo de Cordova, who had acquired by the conquest of Granada the reputation of being the first general in Europe. On their part, the Venetians engaged to attack with a fleet of forty galleys, under the orders of Antonio Grimani, all the possessions of the French on the shores of Calabria and Naples. The Duke of Milan promised to intercept all succours coming from France, and to expel the Duke of Orleans from Asti. Maximilian and Bajazet alone remained; the former was to invade the French frontier, and the latter to assist with his money, his fleet, and troops, the Venetians or the Spaniards, according as he might be called upon by Barberigo or Ferdinand the Catholic. This league was the more dangerous to Charles, inasmuch as the enthusiasm with which he had been received had now entirely subsided; for it had happened to him, as to conquerors in general who are blessed with good fortune rather than with great abilities, that, instead of making among the Neapolitan and Calabrian nobles and chief vassals a party inherent to and rooted in the soil, by confirming their privileges and augmenting their power, he had inflicted an injury upon all, by conferring the honours, the employments, and fiefs, upon those who had followed him from France, so that the great offices of the kingdom were exclusively possessed by strangers.

As soon, therefore, as the treaty was made known, Tropea and Amantea, given by Charles to the Lord of Preey, revolted, and displayed the banner of Arragon, and the Spanish fleet had only to anchor before Reggio in Calabria, to induce that city, more dissatisfied with the new than with the former government, to open its gates, whilst Don Frederic, brother of Alphonso, and uncle of Ferdinand, who had never quitted Brindisi, had only in a similar manner to appear before Tarentum, to be welcomed by the citizens as a liberator. Charles VIII. heard this unwelcome intelligence at Naples, whence, already weary of his new conquest, which imposed upon him plans, and the labour of arrangements of which he was utterly incapable, he looked earnestly towards France, where triumphal festivals awaited him on his return. He at once yielded, therefore, to the advice of his councillors, to commence his return, menaced as he was on the north by the Germans, and on the south by the Spaniards. In consequence, he appointed Gilbert de Montpensier, of the house of Bourbon, his viceroy; d'Aubigny of the Scottish house of Stuart, lieutenant of Calabria; Etrenne de Vere, commandant of Gaeta; and Don Julian, Gabriel de Montfaucon, Guillaume de Villeneuve, George de Silly, Bailly de Vitry, and Graziano Guerra, governors of St. Angelo, Manfredonia, Trani, Catanzaro, Aquila, and Sulmone. Then, leaving with Montpehsier the half of his Swiss troops and Gascons, eight hundred French lancers, and about five hundred Italian men at arms, these last under the charge of the prefect of Rome, of Prosper and Fabrizio Colonna, and of Antonio Savelli, he quitted Naples on the 20th of May, to traverse the extent of the Italian peninsula with the remainder of his army, consisting of eight hundred French lancers, two hundred gentlemen of his own guard, one hundred Italians, three thousand Swiss, and a thousand French and Gascons. He relied also upon being met in Tuscany by Camillo Vitelli and his brothers, at the head of two hundred and fifty men-at-arms.

Eight days prior to his departure from Naples, Charles had despatched Monseigneur de St. Paul, brother of the cardinal of Luxembourg, to Rome, and immediately afterwards the Bishop of Lyons, upon a similar mission, both charged to assure Alexander that the King of France was still most firmly and sincerely his ally. Charles, indeed, had nothing so much at heart as to detach the pope from the league, to obtain thereby at once a spiritual and temporal support for himself; but a youthful king, at once ambitious, bold, and brave, was not the neighbour Alexander sought: he would listen, therefore, to no overtures whatever; and as the troops he had demanded from the doge, and from Ludovico Sforza, had not yet arrived in sufficient force for the defence of Rome, he amply provisioned the castle of St. Angelo, placed there a strong garrison for its defence, and leaving the Cardinal St. Anastasius to receive Charles, retired with Cesar Borgia to Orvieto. Charles remained but three days at Rome, chagrined, that in spite of his entreaties, Alexander had refused to await his arrival. Thus instead of adopting the advice of Julian de la Rovere, to call a council, and to depose the pope; he delivered up to the Roman commanders the fortresses of Terracina and of Civita Vecchia, trusting to effect a reconciliation with the pope by this act of amity, keeping only that of Ostia, which he had promised to restore to Julian. At the expiration of three days he quitted Rome. Directing his march in three columns towards Tuscany, and traversing the papal states, he arrived at Sienna on the 13th; where he was rejoined by Philippe de Comines, whom he had sent as ambassador extraordinary to the republic of Venice, and who announced to him that his enemies had forty thousand men under arms, and were preparing to cut off his retreat. This news had only the effect of causing the utmost merriment, both to the king and amid the nobles of his army; for they had conceived so great a contempt for their enemies, arising from the easy conquest of their territory, that they could not believe that any army, whatever its strength might be, would risk such an attempt. Charles was obliged to confess his mistake, when he learnt at San Toranzo that the advanced guard, commanded by the Marshal de Gie, and composed of six hundred lances, and fifteen hundred Swiss, on arriving at Fornovo had found themselves opposed to the confederate army encamped at Guiarola. The marshal instantly halted and drew up his troops, profiting by the heights he occupied, the country around being well adapted for defensive operations. This done, he sent to demand from Francis de Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua, generalissimo of the confederates, a free passage for the army of the king, with provisions at a fair price, forwarding also at the same time a courier to Charles, requesting him to hasten his march, as well as that of the artillery and the rear-guard.

The confederates returned an evasive reply; for they were doubtful whether they should risk in one battle the army of Italy, or whether they should endeavour at one blow to destroy the king, thus burying the conqueror amid his conquests. The courier found Charles occupied in directing the transport of his artillery over the heights of Pentremoli, a matter of great difficulty; for there being no open road, they were forced to drag up and lower the guns by main strength, which occupied at least two hundred men for each piece. But this being at last effected, Charles set forward for Fornovo, where he arrived on the following morning with his body-guard. From the summit of the mountain, where the Marshal de Gie was posted, Charles at one view surveyed the ground occupied by the two camps. They were on the right bank of the Taro, at the extremity of a circle of a chain of hills rising as an amphitheatre around; so that the space between the two camps, a vast basin bounded by a swollen torrent, was a broken gravelly plain, equally unsuited for the movements of cavalry or infantry. To the right lay a little wood which followed the western declivity of the hill, stretching out from the Italian towards the French army, and which was now occupied by the Stradiotes, who, availing themselves of its coverts, had been already engaged in slight skirmishes with the French troops during their two days' halt to await the arrival of the king. This position was not encouraging, for from the height he occupied, the king could readily survey, and calculate the numerical difference between the two armies. Indeed, the French army, weakened by the numerous garrisons it had been obliged to leave in the cities and fortresses it had so lately conquered, now scarcely amounted in all to eight thousand soldiers, whilst the number of the enemy exceeded thirty-five thousand men. Charles resolved therefore to negotiate, and sent Comines to the Venetian Proveditori, with whom, owing to his great merits, he possessed considerable influence. He was charged to say in the name of the King of France, that his master's only desire was uninterruptedly to continue his march; that therefore he required a free passage across the plains of Lombardy, which extended before him to the foot of the Alps.

Great dissension prevailed amongst the confederates when Comines arrived. The advice of the Milanese and the Venetians was to allow the march of the king unchecked; too fortunate, said they, if thus he abandoned Italy without further loss to them; but this opinion was opposed by the Spaniards and Germans. For as their sovereigns had no troops in the army, and their quota of expense had been already paid, they could but profit by a battle; since if gained, they would gather the fruits of victory, and if defeated, would scarcely suffer from the results. The king passed a night of great anxiety; there had been every indication of rain during the past day, and as the Taro is rapidly swollen by the mountain streams, its bed fordable to day might be impassable on the morrow, and the delay which the confederates had imposed upon Comines was probably demanded only to increase the difficulties of the French army. At night a terrible storm burst over the Apennines, which raged until the break of day; and the Taro, which before had glided as a gentle stream, had now overflowed its banks, and was rushing onward with a torrent's force. The king, therefore, at an early hour, already armed and on horseback, summoned Comines, and ordered him to proceed to the place appointed by the confederates for the continuance of the negotiations; but scarcely was the order given, when loud cries were heard from the extreme right of the French army. The Stradiotes, sheltered by the woods, had surprised an outpost, cut it to pieces, and carried, according to their custom, the heads of the vanquished at their saddlebows.

A detachment of cavalry had been sent to check and pursue them, but, like beasts of prey, they had retreated to their woods, where they were soon out of sight. This unexpected attack, incited probably by the Spanish and German ambassadors, produced along the line the effect of a spark upon a train of powder. Comines, on his part, as well as the Venetian Proveditori, endeavoured, but in vain, to put a stop to the disorder; the light horse pressed forward, and following, as was too much the custom, the dangerous influence of personal courage, were already engaged, descending into the plain, as into a circus, and seeking an opportunity for distinction. For a moment the young king, betrayed by a similar feeling, was about to forget also his responsibility as a general to act as the soldier, but the Marshal de Gie, M. Claude de la Châtre, M. de Guise, and M. de la Tremouille, checked his impetuosity, and induced him to adopt a wiser course, which was to cross the Taro without provoking, but without avoiding an engagement, if the enemy should attempt to prevent his passage. Acting upon this advice, the king drew up his army in the following manner:—The first division was composed of the advanced guard and a corps destined for its support, computed at three hundred and fifty men at arms, the best and bravest of the army, commanded by the Marshal de Gie and Jacques Trivulce, and three thousand Swiss, under the orders of Engelbert de Cleves and De Lornay, to whom were added three hundred archers of the guard, on foot, in aid of the cavalry. The second, led by the king, and which formed the main body of the army, consisted of the artillery commanded by Jean de Lagrange, of one hundred gentlemen of the guard, with their banner borne by Gilles Carrmel, the pensioners of the king's household, under d'Aymar de Prie; the Scotch; two hundred mounted crossbowmen; and the remainder of the French archers, under the command of M. de Crussol. The third, or rear-guard, preceded by the baggage, was composed of three hundred men at arms, under M. de Guise and De la Tremouille; and this was the least effective division of the army. These orders executed, Charles directed the advanced guard to cross the river, which was instantly done opposite to Fornivo, the water being up to the knees of the horsemen, and the foot-soldiers holding on by the tails of the horses. When he saw they had gained the opposite side, he put his troops in motion, to ford the river at the same spot, commanding De Guise and De la Tremouille to regulate the march of the rear upon that of his division. De Guise strictly obeyed his instructions, and about ten o'clock in the morning the whole of the French army were upon the left bank of the Taro; and at the same time, as the enemy were rapidly advancing, the baggage, under Odet de Riberac, was removed from the rear to a position on the extreme left. Francisco de Gonzaga, general-in-chief of the confederates, had regulated his plans by those of the king. By his orders the Count de Cajazzo, with four hundred men-at-arms, and two thousand foot-soldiers, was to cross the Taro, near the Venetian camp, to oppose the French advanced guard, whilst he, ascending the river as far as Fornovo, should effect a passage by the same ford as Charles, to attack his rear. Between the two fords he had drawn up the Stradiotes, with orders that as soon as they saw the French attacked both in front and rear, they should cross the river, and engage them in flank. In addition, Gonzaga, in case of retreat, had left upon the other bank of the river three corps of reserve—one to protect the camp, under the orders of the Proveditori, and the others, under Antonio de Montefeltro and Annibale Bentivoglio, drawn up in echelons, so as to support each other. These manœuvres had not passed unobserved by Charles, who recognised in them that skilful strategy, which made the generals of Italy the first tacticians of the world; but, unable to avoid the danger, he ordered the army still to advance. This onward movement was hardly commenced before he was attacked by Cajazzo, with his four hundred men-at-arms and two thousand infantry, and by Gonzaga, who, as arranged, charged the rear with six hundred men, a squadron of Stradiotes, and more than five thousand foot-soldiers, forming the *élite* of his force, and greatly exceeding in this one division the entire force of the French. When De Guise and De la Tremouille found themselves thus hemmed in, they ordered their men to wheel about, whilst De Gie and Trivulce, who commanded the advanced division, drew up, and brought their lances to the rest. In the mean time the king, stationed in the centre, knighted such of the gentlemen as, by their valour, or his esteem for them, had claims to this distinction. Suddenly the cries of a violent onset were heard; it was from the rear now engaged with the Marquis of Mantua. In this encounter, where each had selected his opponent, as in a tourney, many lances were broken, particularly among the Italians, for theirs being hollowed to make them lighter, were consequently less solid. Those who were thus disarmed immediately drew their swords; and as they greatly exceeded his troops in numbers, the king saw them suddenly fall upon the right wing, as if to surround it, whilst at the same time loud shouts were heard in front of the centre division, which proceeded from the Stradiotes, who had now crossed the river, and commenced their attack. The king instantly divided his force into two detachments, and giving the command of one to the Bastard of Bourbon, to enable him to hold the Stradiotes in check, he charged with the other to the aid of the advanced guard, throwing himself amid the thickest of the *mêlée*, striking like a king, but fighting like the lowest of his commanders. Thus relieved, the rear maintained their position, although the enemy was as five to one, and here the combat was maintained with the most inveterate courage.

The Bastard of Bourbon threw himself before the Stradiotes, according to his orders, but, carried away by his horse, he was borne amid their ranks, and instantly cut down. This loss of their chief, the strange costume of their antagonists, and their peculiar mode of warfare, caused at first some confusion among his troops; the centre fell into disorder, and gave way, breaking their ranks, instead of keeping together, and resisting as a mass. This false step would have been destructive, if many of the Stradiotes, seeing the baggage exposed, had not, instead of following up their advantage, rushed towards it in the hope of winning a rich booty. The main body, however, still remained, pressing vigorously the French, and rendering their lances useless by their terrible scimitars. At this moment the king, who had repulsed the attack of the Marquis of Mantau, returned to the aid of the centre, and charged the Stradiotes at the head of the gentlemen of his household, armed no longer with his lance, which he had broken, but with his sword, which flashed round his head like lightning; but whether carried forward by his horse, or urged onward by his impetuous spirit, he was suddenly entangled amid the Stradiotes, accompanied only by eight of his men, one of his esquires, and his standard-bearer. The cry of "France, France, France! to the rescue!" quickly rallied the remainder, who seeing that the danger was less than was at first suspected, began to take speedy vengeance on the Stradiotes for the blows they had received. Things went still better in front, which Cajazzo was to have attacked; for although commanding a division greatly superior in numbers to the French, and although he seemed at first to intend a formidable assault, he drew up suddenly at full charge about twelve paces from his opponents, and wheeled about without crossing a single lance. The French wished to pursue; but De Gie, fearful it might be a snare to separate the front from the centre, ordered this line to maintain its position. The Swiss, however, ignorant of the order, or neglecting it, followed the enemy, and although on foot, overtook and engaged them, slaying about a hundred, which threw the remainder into such disorder that some fled straggling over the plain, whilst others crossed the river to regain their camp. De Gie, upon this, despatched a hundred men to aid the king, who, still fighting with the utmost courage, risked his life at every instant, constantly separated from his officers, who could not follow him, throwing himself with the rallying cry of "France!" wherever the danger was the greatest, and regardless of support. He no longer fought with his sword, which he had broken as well as his lance, but with a heavy battle-axe, of which every stroke was fatal, whether from the blow or thrust. The Stradiotes, thus pressed, had changed their attack into defence, and their defence into flight. It was then the king was exposed to the greatest danger; for following their retreat with his accustomed impetuosity, he was again alone and surrounded by them in such numbers, that had not panic rendered them unobservant to their advantage, they had only to unite to crush both horse and rider. "But he is well protected," says Comines, "whom God protects; and God preserved the King of France." Nevertheless, the rear was still much harassed, for though De Guise and La Tremouille still maintained their position, yet it is probable they must have yielded to superior force if succour had not unexpectedly arrived from two quarters. The first was brought by the king, who, freed from danger amid the fugitives, sought it again amid the combatants. The second was from the retainers of the army, who upon the flight of the Stradiotes, arming themselves with the axes used to cut the wood for erecting the tents, fell upon the enemy, hamstringing the horses, and breaking the helmets of the dismounted cavaliers.

The Italians could not resist this double shock, the *furia francese* defied all the calculations of strategy. For a century they had forgotten or laid aside these bloody contests for the kind of tournament they had nicknamed war; so that, notwithstanding the efforts of Gonzaga, the rear hesitated, wheeled around and fled, recrossing in great haste, and with the utmost difficulty, the Taro, now still more swollen by the rain which had fallen during the whole time of the conflict. Charles was advised by some to follow up his advantage, for such was the disorder of the confederates, that from the field of battle, which the French had so honourably won, they were seen flying scattered in all directions; but the Marechal de Gie and De Guise and La Tremouille, who had shown they could not even be suspected of recoiling before any fancied danger, restrained this impulse, observing, that both men and horse were now so fatigued that an attempt of this kind might probably risk the victory already in their hands. Their opinion was adopted, although opposed by Trivulce, Camillo Vitelli, and Francesco Secco. The king, therefore, retired upon a little village upon the left bank of the Taro, where he dismounted and took off his armour. Of all the officers and soldiers of his army, he had probably been the best and bravest combatant.

The stream of the Taro was so increased during the night that the Italians, even had they recovered from their shock, could not have advanced in pursuit. Charles, on his side, having conquered, had no desire to show symptoms of flight; he remained, therefore, the next day under arms, sleeping the same evening at Medesina, a village a mile only from the spot where he had first rested after the battle. But reflecting that he had done enough to maintain the honour of his army, having beat an enemy whose numbers were quadruple his own, leaving three thousand of their dead upon the field, and having waited the renewal of the combat for a day and a half, had they desired to retrieve their loss, he ordered his watch-fires to be renewed to induce the confederates to believe him still encamped, and then two hours before day-break his troops, now nearly beyond danger of attack, were silently put in motion and advanced upon Borgo-San Donnino.

In the meantime the pope had re-entered Rome, where news quite in accordance with his policy soon reached him. Ferdinand had gone from Sicily into Calabria with six thousand volunteers and a considerable number of Spanish horse and foot, headed by the famous Gonzalvo of Cordova, whose reputation as a general was great, although slightly tarnished by the defeat at Seminora. About the same time the Arragonese fleet had defeated the French, and the battle of the Taro, although a defeat for the confederates, was yet a victory for the pope, as its result was to open a retreat towards France, of the monarch whom he regarded as his deadliest enemy. Thus assured he had no more to fear; he despatched a mandate to Charles, who had delayed his march to succour Novarra, by which, in virtue of his pontifical authority, he ordered him to quit Italy with his army and to recall all his troops within the space of ten days from Naples, on pain of being excommunicated and summoned to appear before him in person. Charles VIII. replied he was at a loss to conceive how the pope could order him to quit Italy, seeing that the army of the league, of which he was the head, had not only refused, but also had endeavoured, though in vain, to prevent his free return to France, a fact of which probably his holiness was aware. Secondly, That as to the recall of his troops from Naples, he could not be guilty of an act so irreligious, considering they had entered that city, not only with the full consent, but with the apostolic benediction of his holiness. Thirdly, That as to his appearance in person in the capital of the Christian world, he was astonished that such a requisition should be now made, seeing that scarcely six weeks before, when he earnestly desired to obtain an interview to evince his filial reverence and obedience, his holiness, instead of granting the favour he solicited, had quitted Rome with such precipitation that he could not effect his purpose, how great soever his diligence had been. That as for this last article, however, he would promise his holiness, if he would engage to await his arrival, to give him the fullest satisfaction upon this point by returning to Rome as soon as the affairs of state, which had recalled him to his kingdom, were arranged to his satisfaction.

However Charles might indulge this haughty raillery, he was not less constrained to obey in part the strange mandate he had received. In fact, notwithstanding the arrival of a reinforcement of Swiss, he was constrained, so urgent was the necessity of his return to France, to conclude a treaty with Ludovico Sforza, by which he ceded to him Novarra, whilst Gilbert de Montpensier and d'Aubigny, after having defended, step by step, Calabria and Naples, were reduced, after a siege of thirty-two days, to sign the capitulation of Atella on the 20th of July, 1496. By this Ferdinand was acknowledged King of Naples, and put in possession of all the fortresses and places belonging thereto, but which he enjoyed only for three months, as he died on the 7th of September at the castle of Somma, near Vesuvius. He was succeeded by his uncle Frederic; and thus within three years Alexander, whilst he established his power on the throne of the pontiffs, had witnessed the transition of five kings on the throne of Naples, Ferdinand I., Alphonso II., Charles VIII., Ferdinand II., and Frederic. Every such event was, however, of great advantage to Alexander, since every successive king was king only upon the condition of receiving the investiture from the pope. The result was, that both in power and opinion Alexander was the only one who had gained by these changes, having been successively recognised, in spite of his acts of simony, as the supreme head of the church by the Duke of Milan, the republics of Florence and of Venice, and in addition flattered and courted by the five kings who had occupied the throne of Naples. He thought, therefore, that the period was now arrived to advance his plans for the future greatness of his house; on the one hand by the Duke of Gandia, who should possess all the temporal dignities, and on the other by Cesar, who could be raised to all the ecclesiastical offices. To execute this design the pope elevated four Spaniards to the cardinalship, which, increasing the number of his countrymen in the college to twenty-two, assured him a constant and certain majority. It was next a point of political importance to sweep away from the environs of Rome all those petty nobles known as the vicars of the church, but whom Alexander called the handcuffs of the papacy. He had already commenced this project, by exciting the Orsini against the Colonnas, when the invasion of Charles obliged him to desist, and to combine all the resources of his mind, and the forces of the papal states, to provide for his own protection. The

Orsini, the ancient friends of the pope, had however joined the French, and entered with them into the kingdom of Naples; and Virginio, one of the chiefs of that powerful family, had been made prisoner during the war, and was now a captive in the hands of Ferdinand. This was an opportunity Alexander could not neglect; therefore, having first commanded the King of Naples not to release his prisoner, whom, since the 1st of June, 1496, he had declared a rebel, on the 26th October following, immediately subsequent to the accession of Frederic, whom he knew to be entirely dependent upon him, not having yet received the investiture, he proceeded to pronounce a sentence of confiscation against Virginio and the Orsini, but as a mere sentence of confiscation was ineffectual; and as it was requisite to disposses them of their estates, he made overtures to the Colonnas, alleging that as a mark of his esteem he entrusted to them, under the direction of his son Francesco, Duke of Gandia, the execution of the decree against their enemies—thus constantly weakening his neighbours by availing himself of their mutual hatred, until he could with safety attack and destroy both. The Colonnas accepted his proposal; the Duke of Gandia was named general of the church—an office which his father conferred upon him in the church of St. Peter. At first every thing proceeded to the pope's satisfaction, and before the close of the year the papal army was in possession of many castles and fortresses belonging to the Orsini, so that they considered themselves as lost; when Charles VIII., whose aid they had solicited, with but faint hopes, pre-occupied as he was with the affairs of his own kingdom, that he could not greatly assist them, sent them, in default of troops, Carlo, son of Virginio Orsino, and Vitellozzo Vitelli, brother of Camillo Vitelli, one of the three valiant condottieri who had fought with him at the battle of the Taro. Their acknowledged bravery and military skill, aided by a considerable sum of money with which Charles had provided them, was attended with the most favourable results; for no sooner had they arrived at Citta-di-Castello, and announced their intention to raise troops, than men everywhere enlisted beneath their banner. These were soon organised; and as the Vitelli had, during their residence in France, particularly studied the military system there in use, and which was superior to the Italian, they adopted the improvements it suggested. These consisted chiefly in changes connected with the artillery, and in substituting for the arms generally in use pikes similar to those borne by the Swiss, but two feet longer, in the management of which Vitellozzo exercised his men for four months; at the expiration of which time, having obtained some auxiliaries from Perusia, Todi, and Narni, he advanced towards Bracciano, to which the Duke d'Urbino, in the interest of the pope, had laid siege. The Venetian general, hearing of Vitelli's approach, advanced to meet him, and the two armies met at Swiano, where an engagement immediately took place.

The army of the pope had a division of about eight hundred Germans, upon which the Dukes d'Urbino and of Gandia principally relied; and justly so, they being in fact the best troops in Europe. Vitelli, however, attacked them with his infantry, who, armed with their formidable pikes, transfixed their opponents, whose weapons were four feet shorter, before they could return their thrust. At the same time his light artillery, keeping pace with the most rapid movements of the army, soon silenced the enemy's fire ; so that, after a long resistance, the papal troops fled, carrying with them, towards Rinciglione, the Duke of Gandia, wounded in the face by a pike, Fabrizio Colonna, and the legate. The Duke of Urbino, who fought in the rear to protect the retreat, was taken prisoner, with all his artillery and baggage. Great as this success was, it did not mislead Vitelli as to his position ; he knew that the Orsini were too much weakened to continue the war, that their military fund would be soon exhausted, and that the disbandment of their troops must then ensue. He hastened, therefore, to excuse his victory, by offering terms that he would probably have refused to sign if he had been beaten ; and these were instantly acceded to by the pope, who, in the interval, had heard that Trivulce was about to repass the Alps, and to return to Italy with three thousand Swiss, and feared, moreover, that this was but the advanced guard of the King of France. It was consequently agreed that the Orsini should pay seventy millions of florins for the expenses of the war, and that the prisoners should be exchanged on both sides without ransom, excepting the Duke of Urbino. As security for the payment of the sum agreed upon, the Orsini surrendered the fortresses of Anguillara and of Cervetri ; and as, upon the day appointed for its payment, the amount was not forthcoming, they delivered up instead the Duke of Urbino, whose ransom (fixed at 40,000 ducats) was nearly equivalent, to the papal commissioners, the cardinals Sforza and San Severino.

Alexander VI., a rigid observer of stipulations upon this occasion, exacted from his own general, taken prisoner in his service, the ransom which was due to his enemies. Moreover, he remitted to Carlo Orsino and Vitellozzo Vitelli the dead body of Virginio, in default of his living person. By fatality the prisoner had died only eight days before the signature of the treaty, of the same malady which had carried off so suddenly the brother of Bajazet. It was just as this treaty was signed that Prosper Colonna and Gonzalvo de Cordova, whom the pope had requested Frederic to send to his assistance, arrived with a force of Spaniards and Neapolitans. Unable to direct them against the Orsini, and unwilling to appear as preferring a useless request, he employed them for the reduction of Ostia. Gonzalvo was recompensed for this by receiving from the hands of the pope the consecrated "golden rose," the highest distinction his holiness could confer, and which honour he shared with Maximilian, the King of France, the Doge of Venice, and the Marquis of Mantua. In the meanwhile, the festival of the Assumption drew nigh, at which Gonzalvo was invited to assist. In consequence he quitted his palace, and went in great pomp to meet the papal cavalry, placing himself upon the left of the Duke of Gandia, whose personal beauty, heightened by his splendid retinue, attracted universal attention ; for he was followed by a suite of pages and valets, whose liveries exceeded in splendour any thing heretofore ever witnessed in Rome, the city of religious pomp. These were all mounted on horses, in rich caparisons of velvet with deep silver fringes, amid which were hung, at regular distances, bells of the same metal. The duke himself was clothed in a robe of gold brocade, wearing around his neck a string of the most costly oriental pearls, and on his cap a chain of gold, ornamented with diamonds, the smallest of which was valued at twenty thousand ducats. This magnificence was the more enhanced by its contrast with the plain costume of Cesar Borgia, whose purple robe admitted of no ornament whatever. The result was, that Cesar's hatred of his brother was increased from the murmurs of applause that everywhere greeted his approach; and from that moment he had decided upon the fate of the man who incessantly crossed the path of his pride, his passions, and his ambition. As for the Duke of Gandia, "it was well for him to leave," says Tommasi, "by this fête, a public memorial of his gracefulness and of his splendour, as this pomp was but the precursor of his funeral."

But Alexander was not content that his son should enjoy a merely vain triumph of wealth and pride, and the war with the Orsini not having realised its proposed results, he decided to increase his possessions by doing that for which in his discourse he had reproached Calixtus, viz.—separating from the papal estates the cities of Benevento, Terracino, and Pontecorvo, and erecting them into a duchy, to be given as an appanage to the Duke of Gandia. This was proposed and decided upon in full consistory, and served still more to exasperate the hatred of Cesar, who nevertheless shared in the paternal favours, being appointed legate, *à latere*, at the court of the King of Naples. Lucretia, who had arrived at Rome ostensibly to be present at the festival, but, in truth, to be again the means of promoting the ambitious designs of her father, after having passed a few days with him and her brothers, had secluded herself in the convent of San Sisto, without any known reason for this step, and in spite of the repeated solicitations of Cesar, that she should delay her resolution till the day of his departure for Naples. This obstinacy on her part awakened suspicions on his; for from the day when the Duke of Gandia had so attracted the attention of the people, he thought she evinced an increasing coldness towards him, and his hatred towards the rival of his shameless passion rose to such a height, that he resolved to sweep him from his path whatever might be the consequence. He desired, therefore, the chief of his sbirri to attend him in his palace the same evening.

Michelotto was well prepared for these mysterious messages, the objects of which generally were to serve some amour, or to accomplish some deed of vengeance; and, as in either case he was well rewarded, he was prompt at the rendezvous at the appointed hour. Cesar awaited his arrival, carelessly leaning against a large projecting chimney-piece, clothed no longer in the cardinal's robe and hat, but in a doublet of black velvet, the slashes of which displayed a satin vest of the same colour. One of his hands played mechanically with his gloves, whilst the other rested upon a poisoned dagger, never absent from his side. This was the costume usually worn by him upon his nocturnal adventures; it excited in Michelotto, therefore, no surprise; he remarked only that Cesar's eyes flashed more luridly than usual, and his cheeks, generally pale, were then absolutely livid. Michelotto at one glance saw the coming shadow of a deed of evil. Cesar motioned to him to close the door; he was obeyed; then, after a short interval, during which the eyes of Borgia seemed as if they would scan every thought and feeling of the reckless bravo who stood uncovered before him:

"Michelotto," he said, with a voice of which a slight accent of raillery betrayed the only sign of emotion, "what think you; does this costume become me?" Habituated as the bravo was to the circumlocutions with which his master most frequently prefaced his designs, this question was so unexpected, that for a moment he was silent—then answered, "Admirably!

and, thanks to it, your excellency has now the appearance, as well as the heart, of a brave soldier." "I am well pleased that this is your opinion," replied Cesar; "and now can you tell me why, instead of this dress, which I can only wear at night, I am forced to disguise myself by day beneath the robe and hat of a cardinal, and to spend my life in riding from church to church, consistory to consistory, instead of leading to the field of battle some noble army, in which you should hold the rank of captain in lieu of being, as you are, the poor chief of a band of miserable sbirri?" "Yes, my lord," replied Michelotto, who had guessed, from his first words, the intentions of Cesar, "yes; he who is the cause of this, is Francesco, Duke of Gandia and of Benevento, your elder brother." "Know you," resumed Cesar, giving to this answer no further sign of approbation than a slight movement of his head, whilst a ghastly smile lingered upon his features,—"know you who has the wealth and not the genius?—who has the casque and not the head?—who has the sword and not the hand?" "Again the Duke of Gandia!" said Michelotto. "Know you, moreover, the man who is ever in the way of my ambition, my power, and my love?" "Still the Duke of Gandia!" "And what think you of it?" demanded Cesar. "I think—that he must die!" coolly replied the bravo. "And your opinion is mine, Michelotto," said Cesar, advancing towards him, and grasping his hand, "and my sole regret is, not to have thought so before; for had I last year borne but a sword, instead of a crozier, I should be now the possessor of some rich domain. The pope wishes to advance the greatness of his house—it is well—but he mistakes the means. It is I he should create a duke—it is my brother he should nominate the cardinal. Had he done this, one thing is most certain: I should have united to the authority of his power the intrepidity of a heart resolute to make that authority and power more effective. He whose ambition would ruin a state or a kingdom, must trample under foot the obstacles in his path; he must strike with the sword or the poignard, nor fear to steep his hands in his own blood. He should follow the example left by all the founders of empires, from Romulus to Bajazet, who became kings by fratricide! And well have you said, Michelotto, what their position was is mine; and I am resolved never to recoil before it. You now know for what purpose you have been summoned. Was I right—can I depénd on you?" Michelotto, who saw his own advantage in the crime, was indifferent to the rest; he answered, therefore, he was entirely at Cesar's disposal; he had only to intimate the time, place, and mode of execution. Cesar replied, as to the time it must be soon, as he himself was about to depart for Naples; as to the place and mode of execution, these would necessarily depend upon their opportunities, but that in the mean time both must watch, and seize the first favourable occasion.

On the following morning Cesar learnt the day of his departure was fixed for the 15th of June, and received at the same time an invitation from his mother to sup with her on the 14th. Michelotto was directed to be in readiness that night at eleven.

The table was arranged in the open air, and in an extensive vineyard that Vanozza possessed, near St. Pietro ad Vincula. The guests were, Cesar Borgia, the Duke of Gandia, the Prince de Squillace, Dona Sancia, his wife, the Cardinal of Monte Reale, Francesco Borgia, son of Calixtus

III., Don Roderic Borgia, Don Godfredo, brother of Cardinal Giovanni Borgia, and Don Alphonso Borgia, nephew of the pope; in fact, all the family, Lucretia excepted, who, residing still at the convent, had refused to be present. It was a splendid repast. Cesar seemed as gay as was his wont; the Duke of Gandia more animated than usual. They were yet at table, when a man masked brought to the young duke a letter, which he instantly opened, whilst his cheeks were flushed with joy, and after reading it, merely said I will go; he then thrust it hastily into his pocket, but not so quickly as to elude the rapid glance of Cesar, who thought he recognized in the address the handwriting of his sister Lucretia.

The messenger departed without attracting the attention of any one but Cesar, for it was then the custom for messages of assignations to be brought either by men whose features were concealed by a mask, or by females hidden by a veil. At ten o'clock the guests arose from the table; yet as the air still breathed the calm luxury of an Italian climate, they walked for some time between the beautiful pines which shaded Vanozza's palace, but without Cesar's losing sight for one minute of his brother. At eleven the Duke of Gandia went away, Cesar did the same, alleging as a reason that he was desirous of proceeding that evening to the Vatican, to take leave of the pope, a duty he could not discharge on the morrow, his departure being fixed for break of day. The brothers, therefore, departed together, mounted their horses and proceeded side by side, until they reached the Palace Borgia, where the Cardinal Ascanio Sforza then resided, having received it as a gift from the pope on the day of his election. The Duke of Gandia here separated from his brother, saying, with a smile, that it was not yet his intention to return home, as he must first keep an engagement he had made. Cesar replied that he was in all respects the master of his own actions, and bade him good night. The Duke of Gandia turned to the right, Cesar to the left, remarking, only, that the street down which the duke proceeded, led towards the monastery in which Lucretia resided; then, with this slight confirmation of his suspicion, he turned his horse towards the Vatican, where having found the pope, he took leave, and received his benediction. From that hour all is obscure as the darkness which shrouded the terrible event now to be related.

On quitting Cesar, the Duke of Gandia appears to have dismissed his attendants and proceeded with a valet towards the place della Giudecca. He here found the man who had spoken to him during the banquet, and forbidding his servant to follow him any further, he desired him to await his return in the street in which they then were, adding, that in about two hours he would rejoin him. At the time mentioned the duke returned, dismissed his masked conductor, and was proceeding towards his palace but scarcely had he passed the corner del Ghetto, when he was attacked by four men on foot, directed by a man on horseback. Supposing either that he was assailed by robbers, or the victim of some mistake, the Duke of Gandia called out his name, but instead of this arresting the daggers of the murderers, it served but to redouble their blows, and he soon fell dead by the body of his dying servant. The horseman, who, passive and motionless, had hitherto witnessed the scene, now reined up his horse backwards towards the body, which was placed by the four assassins behind him, and walking by his side to conceal it and keep its position, they were soon lost in the narrow street which leads to the church Santa-Maria de Monticelli. As for the servant, believing him to be dead, they left him stretched upon the pavement. But slightly recovering, his groans were heard by the inmates of a poor dwelling-house, who raised and placed him upon a bed, where he instantly expired, without being able to give the slightest indication of the assassins, or of their victim. They awaited the duke's return that night and following morning at his palace; expectation became fear, and fear soon became alarm; they sought the pope and acquainted him that since his departure from his mother's house, the duke had not been seen. But Alexander endeavoured to dissipate their anxiety and his own, hoping that his son, overtaken by day-light in some intrigue, awaited the closing in of night, to return home. But the night passed as the day, he came not, so that the following morning the pope, a prey to the saddest forebodings, abandoned himself to grief, unable to give utterance to more than these words, a thousand times repeated—"Search for him, search for him; ascertain how my poor son died!" His wish was earnestly complied with, for the duke was beloved by all; but inquiry was in vain, they discovered only the body of the valet; of the master there was no trace. Thinking, however, that he had probably been thrown into the Tiber, they commenced their search, ascending the river from the street della Ripetta, inquiring of all the boatmen, or fishermen, who might have seen, either from their windows or barks, whatever had happened in their vicinity during the two preceding nights. At first all inquiry was useless, but on reaching the street del Fontanone, they found a man who stated, that during the night of the fourteenth or fifteenth, he had witnessed a circumstance that might have some connexion with the subject of their anxiety. The following was his statement:—"Having left," said he, "on Wednesday evening my cargo of wood upon the bank, I remained in my boat enjoying the freshness of the night, and watching lest another should remove what I had just discharged, when, towards two o'clock in the morning, I observed two men advance from the street to the left of the church of St. Geronimo, whose cautious glances, directed on all sides, showed they had come thither to observe whether any one was passing but themselves. Assured the street was empty they returned, and from it two more shortly emerged, using the same precaution, as if to satisfy themselves that all was as before, which being so, they gave a signal to their comrades to rejoin them. A man on horseback now came forward, having behind him a corpse, the head and arms of which hung down on one side, the legs upon the other, supported by the two men I had first noticed examining the street and places adjacent. Three of them now approached the river, whilst the others watched the street, and turning towards the spot where the filth of the city is discharged into the Tiber, the horseman backed his horse towards the stream, and the two men at his side taking the body, one by the feet, the other by the head, swung it to and fro a few times, and then threw it with all their strength into the river. On hearing the noise of its fall into the water, the cavalier asked—'Is all over; is it done?' to which the men replied, 'Yes, Signor.' He turned his horse round, and seeing a dark mass floating upon the stream, he inquired what that might be. 'Signor, it is his mantle,' replied one, whereupon another, running towards the place where it was yet seen, sunk it immediately with stones. This done, they retired, proceeding along the principal street, but soon disappearing in the narrow way which leads you towards San Giacomo." Upon this, which destroyed all hopes, even in the hearts of those in whom hope had hitherto lingered, one of the servants of the pope demanded, how, being the witness of such a scene, he had not instantly denounced it to the governor? But the man replied, that since he had worked upon the river, he had seen bodies thrown in a similar manner a hundred times into its stream, without hearing that it had ever caused the slightest anxiety; he was persuaded, therefore, it would be as before, and had not considered it to be a duty to speak, believing no greater importance would be attached to the present than to any former occurrence of the sort. Guided by this information, the servants of his holiness collected immediately the boatmen and fishermen of the river, and promising a high reward to him who should first discover the body, they had soon more than a hundred of them at work, so that before evening of the same day, two bodies were brought up, one of which was instantly recognised as that of the murdered duke. The first examination of it left no doubt as to the cause of his death. He had been stabbed in nine places, his clothes remained untouched, his purse was filled with gold; it was evidently an act of revenge, and not one of robbery. The boat in which the body was placed ascended the river into the castle of St. Angelo, where, upon its arrival, it was clothed in the splendid dress the duke had worn at the festival of the assumption, and near it were arranged the insignia of the general of the church. It remained thus exposed for one day to all but his father, whose grief would not suffer him to witness the scene. At night his most faithful attendants bore the body to the church della Madonna del Popolo, with all that pomp with which the court and the church could at once invest the funeral of a pope's son.

CHAPTER V.

In the meantime Cesar Borgia had placed with his blood-stained hands the crown upon the head of Frederic of Arragon. This blow had deeply affected Alexander; but ignorant at first whom to suspect, he had given the most rigorous orders to discover the assassins. But slowly the hideous truth revealed itself before him. He saw that the blow which had thus stricken his house, proceeded from his house. His despair became frenzy. He ran like one frantic through the Vatican, and entering the consistory, his clothes torn, his hair dishevelled and covered with ashes, he confessed with broken sobs, all the crimes and disorders of his past life, acknowledging the blow inflicted on his own blood by his own blood, to be the just retribution of God; then retiring into one of the darkest and most secret recesses of his palace, he shut himself up, determined, as he said, to starve himself to death. And in fact for more than sixty hours he denied himself all food and rest, replying to those who sought to divert him from his purpose, with tears and groans, or the howlings of a wild beast; so that at length Giulia Farnese, his new mistress, in general known as Giulia Bella, unable to influence him, was obliged to seek Lucretia, to overcome his fatal resolution. Lucretia left her retreat where she yet sorrowed over the death of the Duke of Gandia, to endeavour to console her father. At her voice the door opened, and then only the Cardinal of Segovia, who had been nearly a whole day kneeling upon the threshold, imploring his holiness to subdue his grief, was enabled to enter with the attendants, who brought in some wine and refreshments.

The pope remained alone with Lucretia three days and nights; he then reappeared in public, calm, if not resigned, for Guicciardini assures us, that his daughter had clearly shown how dangerous it would be for him to evince before the assassin, who was about to return, the excessive affection which he bore towards his victim. Cesar was still at Naples, remaining there as well to give the father's grief time to subdue its violence, as to conclude another negotiation with which he was charged, and which was no less a matter than proposals of marriage between Lucretia and Don Alphonso d'Arragon, Duke de Bicelli and Prince de Salerno, natural son of Alphonso II., and brother of Donna Sancia. It is true that Lucretia was married to the Lord of Pezaro, but then she was the daughter of a father upon whom Heaven had bestowed a power to bind and to loose. This was no obstacle: when the betrothed was ready, the divorce was at hand. Alexander was too good a politician to allow his daughter to remain married to a son-in-law no longer of service to his interests.

Towards the end of August, it was reported that the legate, having terminated his embassy to the satisfaction of all, was on the point of returing to Rome. He did so, about the 5th of September, nearly three months after the death of the Duke of Gandia, and on the morning of the sixth he went to the Church Santa-Maria-Novella, at the entrance to which, according to custom, the cardinals and the ambassadors of Spain and Venice attended him on horseback to the Vatican, where he was received by the pope, who, in compliance with the ceremony, gave him his benediction and embraced him. Then, accompanied in the same manner as upon his entrance, he was reconducted to his apartments, from whence, as soon as he was alone, he returned to those of the pope, for in the consistory neither of them had spoken, and the pope and his son had much to converse upon; not, as might be supposed, relative to the death of the Duke of Gandia, for his name was never mentioned; and indeed from that hour he seemed to have been tacitly forgotten, as though he had never existed. It was rightly rumoured that Cesar was the bearer of good news; King Frederic consented to the proposed marriage; and consequently that of Sforza and Lucretia was annulled for a simulated cause. He authorized, also, the disinterment of the body of Djem, which to the pope was of the value of three hundred thousand ducats.

Then, as Cesar had desired, it was he who succeeded to the influence of the Duke of Gandia with the pope; and of this the Romans were soon aware. There was an endless succession of fêtes, balls, masquerades, and hunting parties, where Cesar, who began to lay aside his cardinal's robe, appeared in a French dress, followed like a king by the retinue of the papal court; so that the city was entirely given up to lewdness and debauchery, and had never, says the Cardinal of Viterbo, been, even in the days of Nero or Heliogabulus, more disposed to sedition, more devoted to luxury, or more stained with murder. The number of robbers was so great, and such was their audacity, that it was dangerous to pass without the walls, unsafe to remain within them. Neither house nor palace was a defence; justice and law were fled. Gold, force, and pleasure governed Rome. And now, by the just retribution of Heaven, Alexander and Cesar began to covet the fortunes of those even who, by their simony, had raised them to their present state. The first essay that they made in this new mode of coining money, was upon the Cardinal of Cosenza. A dispensation had been granted to the last heiress to the throne of Portugal, a professed nun, by virtue of which she had been married to a natural son of the late king. This marriage was extremely prejudicial to the interests of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain; they sent, therefore, ambassadors to Alexander, to complain of this proceeding, at the moment when the house of Arragon was about to contract an alliance with the holy see. Alexander understood and resolved to rectify his error. He in consequence denied all knowledge of the brief, for the signature of which he had received 60,000 ducats, and accused the Bishop of Cosenza, secretary of the apostolic briefs, of having granted a forged dispensation. Upon this charge the archbishop was conveyed to the castle of St. Angelo, and proceedings against him commenced. But as proof was not readily to be obtained, particularly if the archbishop persisted in his assertion that the dispensation was really the act of the pope, they resolved to lay a snare, of the success of which there was no doubt. One evening the archbishop saw the Cardinal Valentino enter his prison, with that open, affable, and sincere manner which he so well knew how to assume when it suited him, and frankly stating the embarrassments of the pope, assured him that his holiness felt that he alone, as his best friend, could relieve him from them. The archbishop replied he was willing to act as his holiness desired. Then Cesar, seating himself at the table upon which he had found the captive leaning at his entrance, explained to him the position in which the holy see was placed; it was sufficiently embarrassing. At the moment of contracting an alliance so important as that with the house of Arragon, they could not avow that for a few miserable ducats his holiness had signed a dispensation, which conferred upon the husband and the wife all those legitimate rights to a crown, upon which Ferdinand and Isabella had no other claims but those of conquest. The archbishop would then clearly understand what the pope required; it was the mere avowal he had thought that he had taken upon himself to grant the dispensation. As the punishment of such an error would devolve upon Alexander, the archbishop might readily suppose that it would be truly paternal; and moreover, as the judgment and the recompence were in the same hands, while the judgment would be that of a father, the reward would be that of a king. And this reward would be the appointment to be present, as legate, and with the rank of cardinal, at the marriage of Lucretia and Alphonso. The archbishop was well aware of the characters of the men with whom he had to deal; he knew they shrunk from no measures to obtain their ends. He knew they possessed a powder which had the taste and smell of sugar, of which it was impossible to ascertain the admixture in aliments, which caused death, slow or quick, according as they desired, and without the slightest trace of its presence. He knew the secret of the poisoned key, which the pope kept by him, and that when his holiness wished to rid himself of some one of his familiars, he desired him to open a certain wardrobe, but as the lock of this was difficult to turn, force was requisite before the bolt yielded, by which a small point in the handle of the key left a slight scratch upon the hand, which was mortal. He knew also that Cesar wore a ring, composed of two lions' heads, the stone of which he turned inwards when he wished to press the hand of a friend. It was then the lion's teeth became those of a viper; and the friend died cursing the villany of Borgia. Partly influenced by his fears, partly by the hope of recompence, the archbishop yielded, and Cesar returned to the Vatican, possessed of the precious paper by which the Archbishop of Cosenza acknowledged he alone was guilty of the dispensation granted to the royal nun. Two days after, by aid of the proofs which the archbishop had himself supplied, the pope, in presence of the governor of Rome, the auditor of the apostolic chamber, and other judicial officers, pronounced his sentence, which condemned him to the loss of all his possessions, the degradation from all ecclesiastical orders, and the delivery over of his body to the civil power. Soon after the civil magistrate arrived at the prison to fulfil his mission, accompanied by a registrar, two attendants, and four guards. The sentence was read, the attendants stripped the prisoner of his episcopal robes, and clothed him in a robe of coarse cloth, drawers of the same material, and heavy shoes. The guards then put him into one of the deepest dungeons of the castle of St. Angelo, where he found for furniture a crucifix of wood, a table, a chair, and a bed; for recreation a lamp, Bible, and Breviary; and for nourishment, two pounds of bread, and a small cask of water, which were to be renewed, as well as the oil for the lamp, every three days. At the expiration of a year, the archbishop died of despair, after having gnawed his own arms in his agony.

The same day that he was thus consigned to his living tomb, Cesar, who had so well managed this transaction, received from the pope the whole of the estates of the archbishop. Moreover his perfidy in this respect had the desired effect: Isabella and Ferdinand could not impute to Alexander the signature of the dispensation, so that no further obstacle existed to the marriage of Lucretia and Alphonso, a matter of great satisfaction to the pope, who thought now of increasing its importance by another union between Cesar Borgia and Donna Carlotta, daughter of Frederic.

Indeed, since the death of his brother, Cesar's actions had always indicated his aversion for the ecclesiastical profession, so that it caused no astonishment when Alexander, having one morning assembled the consistory, Cesar entered, and addressing the pope, said, that from his earliest youth his inclinations had ever been towards secular pursuits, and that it was only in obedience to the absolute commands of his holiness that he had entered the church, had accepted the purple, and his other dignities. That feeling at his age it was as unbecoming for him to yield to his desires as it was impossible to resist them, he humbly entreated his holiness so to consider them, that he might be permitted to resign the habit, and the ecclesiastical dignity—that he might re-enter the world and contract a lawful marriage.

At the same time he besought the cardinals to intercede for him with his holiness, to whom he now resigned, of his free will, the churches, abbeys, and benefices, as well as all other dignities and gifts with which the pope had endowed him. The cardinals remitted the decision to the pope, and he, as a good father, unwilling to constrain the inclinations of his son, accepted his renunciation; Cesar therefore laid aside his mantle, with which, says Tommaso Tommasi, he indeed had no affinity, except that it was the colour of blood.

This renunciation was in fact urgent, and no time was to be lost. Charles VIII. on returning, heated and fatigued from the chase, had been struck by apoplexy soon after supper, and had died, leaving his throne to Louis XII. Alexander, always on the watch for every political change, saw at once the advantage he could gain from this circumstance, and was prepared to profit by any request the new king might be induced to prefer. Louis XII. was, in fact, in want of his temporal aid, for his expedition against the duchy of Milan, and of his spiritual aid to dissolve the marriage with Joan, daughter of Louis XI., who was barren, and horribly deformed, and whom he had married solely from fear of his father. Now Alexander was willing to grant these, and moreover to raise his friend, George d'Amboise, to the cardinalship, if on his part the King of France would use his influence with his sister Donna Carlotta, to effect her marriage with his son. Negotiations to this end were already much advanced on the day when Cesar had laid aside the purple and assumed the secular dress, and then it was that the Seigneur de Villeneuve, envoy to the King Louis XII., and who was to conduct Cesar into France, arrived at Rome, and presented himself before the ex-cardinal, who during one month received and entertained him with all that luxury and flattering attention with which he so well knew to flatter those whose services he required; after which they departed, preceded by a courier of the pope's, who ordered the different towns and cities through which they passed to receive them with every mark of honour and respect. A similar order had been transmitted throughout France, where they provided the illustrious travellers with so numerous a guard, and a population so densely crowded to see them, that some of Cesar's suite wrote to Rome, that in France they had seen neither trees, houses, nor walls, but only men, women, and the rays of the sun. The king, pretending to go to the chase, received his guest at two leagues from the city; and as he knew that Cesar liked the name of Valentino, which he had borne as cardinal, and still retained with the title of count, although he had resigned the archbishopric from which it had been derived; he granted to him the investiture of Valence, in Dauphiny, with the rank of duke, and a pension of twenty thousand francs; and after having made him this kingly present, and conversed with him for two hours, he departed, to allow Cesar time to arrange the splendid procession he had prepared for his entry into the city of Chinon.

His retinue consisted, first of twenty-four mules, covered with red caparisons, ornamented with escutcheons, bearing the arms of the duke, and laden with coffers and trunks, carved and encrusted with ivory and silver: then came twenty-four more, also in yellow and red caparisons, being the livery of the King of France: then, after these, ten others, covered with yellow satin, with red bars across it; and ten covered with striped gold brocade, of which one stripe was of raised gold thread, the other of smooth gold. Behind these came sixteen war-horses, led by as many esquires on foot; and these were followed by eighteen hunting horses, rode by eighteen pages, all between fourteen and fifteen years of age, sixteen of whom were clothed in crimson velvet, and two in fine gold thread brocade. To these succeeded six handsome mules, all harnessed in crimson velvet, led by six valets, clothed in velvet of the same colour. The third group consisted of two mules, entirely covered with cloth of gold, each carrying two coffers, in which were the treasures of the duke, the rich present he brought for his betrothed, and the relics and bulls that his father had charged him to deliver to his good friend Louis XII. They were followed by twenty gentlemen of his suite, clothed in gold and silver brocade, amongst whom were Paolo Giordano Orsino and many barons and knights. Then came two tambourines, a rebec, and four soldiers sounding silver trumpets and clarions; and then, surrounded by twenty-four lacquays, half of them in dresses of crimson velvet, the others in yellow silk, Messire George d'Ambroise and the Duke de Valentinois, who was mounted upon a noble courser in a rich robe of red satin and of gold brocade, embroidered with pearls and precious stones. Around his cap was a double row of rubies, the size of beans, which cast so rich a glow, that they realized the idea of those carbuncles we read of in the "Arabian Nights;" from his neck hung a collar valued at two hundred thousand francs; nor was there a point, even to his boots, that was not laced with gold twist, and embroidered with pearls. His horse was covered with a cuirass, composed of leaves of gold, of the most admirable workmanship, enriched by bouquets of pearls and clusters of rubies. As a termination to this magnificent cortege, behind the duke came twenty-four mules, in rich red caparisons, with his arms; these bore the silver plate, tents, and baggage.

But that which bestowed on the cavalcade the appearance of exhaustless luxury was, that all these mules and horses were shod with shoes of gold, so badly fastened that more than three-fourths remained upon the road, an extravagance for which Cesar was highly censured, it being held an act of great indecorum to put beneath the feet of horses a metal of which the crowns of kings are made. Nevertheless, all this parade was thrown away upon her for whom it had been displayed, for when it was mentioned to Donna Carlotta that it was in the hope of winning her affections that Cesar had come into France, she only replied that she would never marry a man who was not only a priest, but the son of a priest; not only an assassin, but the assassin of his brother; not only a man infamous by his birth, but still more infamous by his principles and actions.

In default of the fair Arragonese, Cesar found another princess who accepted him; this was Mademoiselle d'Albret, daughter of the King of Navarre, who, on condition that the pope would endow her with one hundred thousand ducats, and make her brother a cardinal, was married to him the 10th of May; and on the day of Pentecost ensuing the Duke of Valentinois received the order of St. Michael, first founded by Louis XII., and then the most valued decoration of the kingdom.

The announcement of this marriage, which cemented the alliance between Rome and Louis XII., was received with great joy by the pope, who celebrated it with much pomp. On his part, Louis, besides the gratitude he felt towards the pope for having divorced him from Joan of France, and authorised his marriage with Anne of Brittany, considered it indispensably requisite to have his holiness for an ally, in furtherance of his plans upon Italy. He promised, therefore, the Duke of Valentinois that as soon as he should possess Milan, to place three hundred lances at his command, whom he might use for his own purposes against whomsoever he desired, excepting always the allies of France; and this conquest would be undertaken when Louis had secured the support, or at least the neutrality of the Venetians, to whom he had sent envoys, empowered to promise in his name the cession of Cremona and of Ghiera d'Adda, upon being master of Lombardy.

Every circumstance was favourable at this period to the foreign policy of Alexander VI., when he was obliged to withdraw his attention from France, and devote it exclusively to Florence. It was on this account: in Florence there was a man, without duchy, crown, or sword; possessing no other power but his genius, no other armour but his purity, no offensive weapon but his eloquence, and who was becoming more dangerous to him than could be all the kings, dukes, or princes of the earth—and this man was the poor Dominican, Jerome Savonarola, he who had refused absolution to Lorenzo de Medici, because he was unworthy to restore liberty to his country. Jerome Savonarola had predicted the French invasion of Italy, and Charles VIII. had conquered Naples; he had predicted to that monarch that, because he fulfilled not the liberative mission intrusted to him by God, he should be stricken by a great misfortune, and Charles VIII. had died: finally, as the man who daily paced the holy city, crying for eight days, "Woe to Jerusalem!" and on the ninth, "Woe unto myself!"—so had Savonarola predicted his own destruction. But the Florentine reformer was incapable of recoiling before his own danger; nor was he less resolved upon attacking the colossal abomination enthroned in the seat of St. Peter; so that every fresh debauch, which had been shamelessly paraded in the face of the day, or attempted its disgraceful concealment in the gloom of night, had been pointed at, and given up to the execration of the people. Thus had he denounced the illicit connexion of Alexander with the beauteous Giulia Farnese; thus had he pursued with his maledictions the murder of the Duke of Gandia, that fratricide caused by incestuous jealousy; and thus had he shown to his countrymen the lot which awaited them when the Borgias, lords of petty principalities, should attempt the conquest of duchies and republics. To Alexander, Savonarola was at once a spiritual and temporal enemy, whom it was requisite to crush at any cost. Great, however, as was the power of the pope this was not easily to be effected. Savonarola, who preached the austere principles of liberty, had formed, even in rich and voluptuous Florence, a strong party, known as the Piangioni, or Penitents, consisting of citizens, who, desirous at once of a reform in the church and the republic, accused the Medici of having enslaved their country, and the Borgias of having shaken the foundations of faith, and demanded that the republic should revert to its popular principles, and religion to her primitive simplicity. They had already made great progress with regard to the first point; for, despite of two powerful factions, (that of the Arrabiati, or the "Enraged," which consisted of the noblest and most wealthy aristocratic youths of Florence, who desired an oligarchy, and that of the Bigi, or the "Grey," who designed the recal of the Medici, and were so called from their stealthy meetings,) they had obtained by degrees an amnesty for all past political offences, the abolition of the Balia, an aristocratic privilege, the establishment of a council of eighteen hundred citizens, and the substitution of popular elections for nominations by lot, or at the pleasure of the oligarchy.

The first measure Alexander employed against the increasing power of Savonarola was to declare him a heretic, and as such to interdict him the pulpit; but the monk eluded this by appointing Domenico Bonvicini, of Pescia, his disciple and friend, to preach in his place. The only result was, that the precepts of the master were uttered by another; and the seed, though scattered by a different hand, did not fall upon a less fertile soil. Moreover, Savonarola (offering to the future the example which Luther so advantageously followed when, twenty-two years afterwards, he burnt at Wittemberg the excommunication of Leo X.), weary at last of silence, had declared, upon the authority of Pope Pelagius, that an unjust excommunication was of itself inefficacious, and that he against whom it had been thus pronounced had not even need of absolution. He therefore announced, on Christmas-day, A.D. 1597, that the Lord had directed him to renounce the obedience of the servant, owing to the corruption of the master; and had thereupon resumed his duties in the cathedral church with a success, the greater because his discourses had been interrupted, and an influence the more formidable, because it rested upon those sympathies which an unjust persecution invariably excites amongst the masses. Alexander upon this applied to Leonardo de Medici, vicar of the archbishopric of Florence, who, in obedience to his orders, published a mandate, forbidding the faithful to follow the ministry of Savonarola. By the terms of this rescript those who did so would be denied both confession and the communion, should they die, as infected with heresy; their bodies would be drawn upon a hurdle, and be deprived of the rites of sepulture. On the publication of this mandate, Savonarola appealed from his superior to the people and the senate, and by their united decision the episcopal vicar received, early in 1498, an order to quit Florence within two hours.

This expulsion was a fresh triumph for Savonarola, and wishing to avail himself of his increasing influence, as a means towards the improvement of public morals, he resolved to change the last day of the carnival, a day dedicated hitherto to earthly pleasures, into one of religious contrition. In consequence, on Shrove Tuesday a considerable number of children having assembled before the cathedral, divided themselves into companies, and, traversing the city, went from house to house, demanding the profane books, sensual paintings, lutes, harps, cards, and dice, the cosmetics and perfumes, in fact all those inventions and products of a corrupt state of society, by means of which Satan weans the heart of man from the ordinances of God. And the inhabitants of Florence, obeying this injunction, came to the Duomo, bearing all these instruments of perdition, which soon formed an immense pile, to which the youthful reformers set fire, singing at the same time hymns and religious psalms. Many copies of Boccaccio, of the Morgante Maggiore, and several pictures by Fra Bartolomeo, were then destroyed; and from that hour the genius of the artist was consecrated entirely to the conception and expression of religious subjects. A reform of this description was fearful for Alexander. He resolved, therefore, to assault Savonarola by the aid of the weapon with which he was attacked—by eloquence. He selected for this purpose a preacher of acknowledged ability, named François de Pouille, and sent him to Florence, where he preached in the church de Santa Croce, and accused Savonarola of heresy and impiety. Moreover, at the same time he declared by a new brief, that if the senate did not silence the heresiarch, the property of the Florentine merchants situated within the papal territory, would be sequestered, and an interdict laid upon the republic, as a declared enemy to the church. The senate, abandoned by France, and witnessing the fearful increase of the pope's temporal power, was now obliged to give way, and intimated to Savonarola its desire upon the point. Savonarola obeyed, and addressed his audience for the last time in a discourse replete with eloquence and dignified resolution. But his retreat, instead of subduing, increased the excitement; people spoke of his prophecies, and their fulfilment; and the disciples, more ardent than their master, ascending from inspiration to miraculous powers, asserted that Savonarola had offered to descend into the tombs of the cathedral with his antagonist, and there, as a solemn proof of the truth of his doctrine, to resuscitate a dead body, promising to admit his errors, if his antagonist performed the miracle. Rumours of this assertion reached François de Pouille, and he being one of those impassioned men who reckon life as nothing when its sacrifice can advance their cause, declared that he acknowledged, in deep humility, he was too miserable a sinner to suppose that God would accord him such a measure of grace, as to perform a miracle; but he offered another proof—to enter with Savonarola into a burning pile. He knew, he said, that he should perish, but he felt that he should die in vindicating the cause of religion, since he was certain to destroy also the tempter who had seduced the souls of so many, with his own, to eternal damnation.

The proposal of brother François was reported to Savonarola, but as he had not originated the first defiance, he hesitated upon accepting the second, whereupon his disciple, Domenico Bonvicini, more confident than his master, as to the extent of his spiritual power, declared that he was willing to accept the ordeal on his own behalf, assured that God would work a miracle at the intercession of his prophet. Immediately a rumour was spread throughout the city, that the challenge was accepted, and the partisans of Savonarola, all zealots, had not the slightest misgiving as to the triumph of their cause. His enemies were overjoyed to witness the self-sacrifice of a heretic; and the indifferent regarded the trial proposed as a spectacle of the most exciting interest. But this devotion of brother Bonvicini de Pescia did not answer the purpose of brother François de Pouille; he was perfectly willing to die even in so terrible a way, but upon condition that Savonarola should die with him. And indeed, of what consequence to him was the death of an obscure disciple like Bonvicini? It was the master it was requisite to strike; the high priest of the doctrine, whom he desired to hurry with him in his fall. He declared then, that he would not ascend the pile unless with Savonarola, and that, playing so fearful a game in his own person, he never would agree that his adversary might play it by proxy. Upon this an unexpected event took place, for instead of brother François de Pouille, who would not contend but with the master, two Franciscans offered to combat with the disciple. These were brothers Nicholas de Pilly and André Rondinelli. Upon seeing this reinforcement brought to their antagonists, the partisans of Savonarola presented themselves in crowds to dare the fiery trial. The Franciscans on their part were unwilling to retreat,—and thus the fervour of both was daily more excited. Florence now had all the appearance of a great madhouse; every one wished for the pile, all desired to enter into its flames; the shout of defiance was no longer limited to the men, but was echoed by women and children, vehemently demanding to undergo the ordeal. At last the senate, reserving the rights of the first combatants, ordered that this strange duel should take place between only Bonvicini and Rondinelli, and ten citizens were appointed to arrange the proceedings; the day fixed upon was the 7th April, 1498, and the place, the square before the palace.

The citizens selected discharged their task very faithfully. A scaffold was erected on the place appointed; it was five feet high, ten broad, and seventy-four feet long. Through this, which was completely covered with faggots and heather, and enclosed by rails made of the driest wood they could procure, two paths, two feet each in breadth, and seventy long, were constructed, the entrance to both being in the Loggia dei Lanzi, and the outlet at the opposite extremity. The Loggia was divided by a partition; thus each champion had a kind of apartment in which to prepare himself for action, as at a theatre every actor has his dressing-room; but here the tragedy to be performed was no fiction. The Franciscans arrived and occupied the place appointed for them, without the slightest religious demonstration; not so Savonarola: he on the contrary appeared in procession, clothed in his sacerdotal robes, and holding in his hands the host, exposed to the view of all, being enclosed in a tabernacle of crystal. The hero of this scene, Domenico da Pescia, followed with a crucifix; next to him the Dominicans, each holding a red cross in his hand, and singing psalms; after these the principal citizens of their party, carrying torches, so certain of the triumph of their cause that they wished themselves to set fire to the pile. As for the place itself—it was a dense mass of human life, the overflowing of which filled all the streets adjacent; at every door and window heads were seen in regular gradation, one row above another; every housetop was crowded, even the roof of the Duomo and of the cupola was studded with spectators. However, as the trial drew nigh, the Franciscans raised such difficulties that it was clear their champion's resolution was failing. They first expressed their fear that Bonvicini might probably be an enchanter, and as such was provided with some secret talisman or charm, which would protect him against the flames. They required, therefore, that he should be stripped of the clothes he then wore in exchange for others to be examined by them. To this Bonvicini made no opposition. Next, observing that Savonarola had placed in his hands the host, they exclaimed it was an act of profanation to expose it to the flames; that it was not included in the terms; and that unless Bonvicini renounced this supernatural aid, they would forego the trial. Savonarola replied, it could be no matter of surprise, that the champion of the true faith, having placed his trust in God, should carry in his hands that God, from whom he expected his salvation. This reply was unsatisfactory to the Franciscans, who would not swerve from their demands. Savonarola, on his side, was inflexible: thus four hours passed away in fruitless discussion. In the meantime the populace, crowded together from the break of day, suffering from hunger and thirst, betrayed their impatience in such murmurs, that the partisans of Savonarola, still confident of victory, implored him to yield the points in dispute. Savonarola answered, that were he himself about to undergo the ordeal, he would readily comply; but since another was to be exposed to danger, he could not be too circumspect. Two hours more were spent, his partisans vainly endeavouring to overcome his refusal. At last, as night was closing in, the murmurs for a long time heard became so menacing, that Bonvicini declared he was ready to pass through the burning pile with only the crucifix in his hands. This it was impossible to refuse, so Rondinelli yielded, and it was announced that the terms were agreed upon, and that the ordeal would immediately take place. Upon this the excitement of the populace died away; but at the moment when the torches were applied, and the smoke and flames of the pile arose, a storm, which had long been gathering, burst over Florence with such force, that these were instantly extinguished, and the pile made incapable of being relit. The populace now considered themselves tricked—enthusiasm was converted into contempt; and not knowing from which side the difficulties that retarded the ordeal had proceeded, they threw the blame upon both. The senate, foreseeing the disorder that would ensue, commanded the crowds to disperse; but no attention was paid to this, and the people, notwithstanding the rain, awaited the departure of the two champions. Rondinelli was conducted home, pursued by hootings, and a shower of stones. Savonarola, from respect to his sacerdotal robes, and the host that he bore in his hands, passed quietly through the crowds, a miracle hardly less remarkable than if he had traversed unhurt the flames of the pile! But it was the sacred host which had protected him, whom they regarded from that hour as a false prophet; and it was with great regret that the mob, excited by the Arrabiati, who had long proclaimed Savonarola to be a liar and a hypocrite, had allowed the return to his convent unmolested. On the morrow, therefore, which was Palm Sunday, when he appeared in the pulpit to explain his conduct, he was unable, amid insults, hisses, and jeers, to obtain a moment's hearing. The cries, at first, of derision, soon became menacing; and Savonarola unable, owing to the weakness of his voice, to control the tumult, quitted the pulpit and retired into the sacristy, from which he retreated to his convent, where he shut himself up in his cell. At this instant a cry was heard, caught, and repeated immediately by all around. "To St. Mark's! To St. Mark's!" and this party of insurgents was recruited as it traversed the streets by a vast multitude, who rushed on, like a rising tide, to level the walls of the convent. The gates, closed as they approached, soon crashed beneath their resistless force; and Savonarola and his two adepts, Bonvicini and Maruffi, arrested in their cells, were conveyed to prison amid the insults of the populace, who, ever in the extreme of enthusiasm or hatred, would have torn them in pieces, and were restrained only by the assurance that the magistracy would compel the prisoners to undergo the ordeal which they had avoided. Alexander VI, although not present, had not been, as may be supposed, an uninfluential party to this rapid and strange apostacy; and no sooner was he apprised of the arrest and fall of Savonarola, than he reclaimed him as a subject of ecclesiastical authority.

But notwithstanding the indulgences with which the pope accompanied this demand, the senate insisted that the trial of Savonarola should take place at Florence; but to avoid all appearance of a desire to withdraw the accused from the papal authority, requested the pope to add two ecclesiastical judges to the Florentine tribunal. Alexander, perceiving he could obtain no further concession, consented, and deputed Joachimo Turriano of Venice, and Francesco Ramolini;—provided beforehand with the decree, that pronounced Savonarola and his accomplices heretics, schismatics, persecutors of the holy church, and misleaders of the people. After all, this apparent firmness of the Florentines in the maintenance of their rights was but an empty exhibition; for in fact the tribunal was packed, and consisted of eight of the most unscrupulous enemies of Savonarola—whose trial had commenced by torture. The result was, that feeble in body, of a nervous irritable constitution, Savonarola had been unable to endure the torture of the cord, and overcome by pain (at the moment when hoisted up by the wrists, the executioner had suddenly let him fall within two feet of the ground), had confessed, in the hope of some mitigation, that his prophecies were but simple conjectures. It is true, that on re-entering his prison, he had protested against this confession, asserting that his physical weakness, and his inability to endure torture, had wrung it from him; but that the truth was, the Lord had oftentimes appeared to him in his trances, and had inspired what he had foretold. This led to a repetition of the torture, during which Savonarola again yielded, and admitted what he had retracted.

But hardly unbound, with every limb yet quivering beneath the rack, he declared that his confession was the work of his tormentors, and would recoil upon their heads; but that, for himself, he again protested against all past and future admissions on his part. For a third time, torture wrung from him the same confession; and repose brought its retractation; so that at last his judges, after having condemned him and his disciples to the flames, decided that his confession should not be read publicly at the pile, being assured that if it were, then even as before he would deny it aloud; a circumstance which might be, considering the fickleness of public opinion, productive of the very worst results. On the 23rd of May the funeral pile, so long promised, was reconstructed before the palace, and now the multitude reassembled, confident they would not be this time deprived of a spectacle for which they had so long yearned. Accordingly, towards eleven o'clock, Jerome Savonarola, Domenico Bonvicini, and Selvestre Maruffi, were brought to the place of execution; and being first degraded from their rank by the ecclesiastical judges, were bound in the centre of an immense pile of wood, all three to the same stake. Then the Bishop Pagnanoli declared to the condemned, that he separated them for ever from the church.—"From the militant?" replied Savonarola, who from that hour, owing to his martyrdom, entered into the glories of the church triumphant. This was all the victims uttered; for at that moment an Arrabiato, a personal enemy of Savonarola, breaking through the line formed by the guards around the scaffold, snatched a torch from the hands of the executioner, and set fire to the four corners of the pile. When the smoke arose, Savonarola and his disciples began to sing a psalm; and still, when wrapped in the devouring flames, the solemn strain was heard, which ascended to open for their souls an entrance through the gates of heaven.

CHAPTER VI.

Thus freed from the most dangerous enemy that as yet had ever risen against him, Alexander VI. nevertheless pursued the condemned with unrelenting vengeance even after death. Yielding to his importunity, the senate gave orders that the ashes of the prophet and of his disciples should be thrown into the Arno, but some half burnt bones were notwithstanding treasured up by the very soldiers whose duty it was to keep back the populace from the pile, and these sacred relics are exposed even now, all blackened with the flames, to the adoration of the faithful, who, if they regard Savonarola no longer as a prophet, yet at least revere him as a martyr.

The French army in the mean time were preparing once more to cross the Alps, under the command of Jacques Trivulce. Louis XII. had proceeded as far as Lyons to accompany Cesar Borgia, and Julien de la Rovere, whom he had contrived to reconcile with each other: and at the beginning of May had pushed forward his advanced guard, which the main body soon followed. The king's forces consisted of sixteen hundred lances, five thousand Swiss, four thousand Gascons, and three thousand five hundred foot soldiers, levies raised from every district of France. On the 13th of August the army, amounting to nearly fifteen thousand men, and which was to combine its movements with those of the Venetians, arrived before the walls of Arezzo, to which it immediately laid siege. The position of Ludovico Sforza was hopeless; he now suffered the punishment of his imprudence, by inviting the French to invade Italy; every ally abandoned him, either on account of their own more pressing interests, or intimidated by the powerful enemy he had raised up. Maximilian, who had promised to send him four hundred lances, instead of renewing hostilities against Lewis, had concluded a treaty with the circle of Suabia to attack the Swiss, whom he had declared rebels to the empire.

The Florentines, who had promised to provide him three hundred men at arms, and two thousand infantry, on condition he should aid them in the reduction of Pisa, had retracted their engagement, at the threats of Louis XII., and had agreed to remain neutral. Lastly, Frederic reserved his troops for his own dominions, for he reasonably concluded that Milan taken, he should have again to defend Naples; and notwithstanding his engagements, withheld all succour, both in men and money. Ludovico Sforza, thus thrown entirely upon his own resources, gave orders for the immediate fortification of Annone, Novarra, and Alexandria; sent Cajazzo to that part of the Milanese which borders on the states of Venice; and collected on the Po the remainder of his army. But all these measures were useless opposed to the impetuous attack of the French. In a few days Arezzo, Annone, Novarra, Voghiera, Castelnuovo, Ponte-Corona, Tortona, and Alexandria were taken, and Trivulce advanced upon Milan. Upon this Ludovico, despairing of maintaining his capital, resolved to retreat into Germany, with his children, his brother Ascanio, and his treasures, which in eight years had decreased from the value of fifteen to two hundred thousand ducats. But before his departure he left the defence of the castle of Milan to Bernardino da Corte. In vain did his friends advise distrust of this man, in vain did Ascanio offer to defend the castle to the last extremity. Ludovico was inflexible; he quitted Milan on September 2, leaving in the citadel three thousand foot soldiers, and a sufficiency of provisions, and supplies of arms and money to maintain a siege of several months. Two days after his departure the French entered Milan. Ten days subsequent, before a shot was fired, Bernardino da Corte surrendered the citadel. Twenty-one days had been sufficient to enable the French to take possession of the towns, capital, citadel, and territories of their opponent. Louis received the news of the success of his troops at Lyons, and departed instantly for Milan, where he was welcomed with the sincerest demonstrations of joy. All ranks of citizens came three miles beyond the walls to welcome him; and forty children, clothed in gold brocade and silk, preceded him, singing hymns written by poets of the day, which hailed the king as a liberator, and the messenger of liberty. This welcome of the Milanese was caused by a rumour which the partisans of Louis XII. had industriously spread, that the King of France was sufficiently wealthy to abolish all taxes. These, indeed, he slightly reduced upon the morning of his entry; distinguished also by his favours many Milanese gentlemen; and gave to Trivulce, as a reward for this rapid and glorious campaign, the city of Vigavano.

Meanwhile Cesar Borgia, who had followed Louis XII., to win either the hound's fee or the hawk's reward, in Italy, no sooner saw the king's object accomplished, than he reminded him of his promise, which, with his proverbial good faith, the king hastened to fulfil. He placed, therefore, immediately at Cesar's disposal three hundred lances, commanded by Yves d'Alègre, and four thousand Swiss, to enable him to subdue the vicars of the church. We must explain whom we mean by this expression.

During the long contests of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, and the exile of the popes at Avignon, the greater number of the cities and fortresses of the Romagna had been conquered or usurped by a multitude of petty tyrants, who, for the most part, had received from the empire the investiture of their possessions; but since the German influence had declined, and the popes had again made Rome the centre of the Christian world, all these petty princes, deprived of their original support, had rallied round the holy see, and had again received the investiture from the pontiffs, paying an annual tenure-due, on account of which they enjoyed the titles of dukes, counts, or lords, and the general denomination of vicars of the church. Now it had been easy for Alexander, upon a rigid examination of the acts and deeds of each of these vassals, to pick out some slight infraction of the agreement between them and their liege lord. He had, therefore, made a formal presentation of his grievances before a tribunal specially appointed, and had obtained a decision in his favour, by which the vicars of the church, as having broken their engagements, were deprived of their domains, which henceforth reverted to the holy see; but as the pope had to do with men, against whom it was far more easy to pronounce judgment than to execute it, he had appointed as his captain-general, and with permission to reconquer their territories on his own account, his son the Duke of Valentinois. The vicars general were the Malatesti of Rimini, the Sforzas of Pesaro, the Manfredi of Faenza, the Riarii of Imola and Forti, the Varani of Camerino, the Montefeltri of Urbino, and the Caëtani of Sermoneta. The Duke of Valentinois, for the purpose of still more increasing the friendship which his relative and ally, Louis XII., evinced towards him, had remained at Milan during the period of his residence in that city; but at the expiration of a month, the king having departed for France, he gave orders to his troops to await his arrival between Parma and Modena, and went in the meanwhile to Rome to lay his future plans before his father, and to receive his final instructions.

He found upon his arrival that his sister Lucretia had acquired a great accession of wealth and power during his absence, not by means of her husband, Alphonso, whose future prospects, owing to the successes of Louis, were now most doubtful—a circumstance which had already caused a great coolness between him and Alexander—but from the liberality of her father, over whom at this period she exercised an influence more surprising than ever. In fact, Lucretia Borgia of Arragon had been declared possessor for life of Spoleto and its duchy, with all the rights and emoluments thereunto depending, a dignity which had so increased and ennobled her position, that she now never appeared in public but with a retinue of two hundred horses, rode by the most illustrious ladies and the noblest cavaliers of Rome. Moreover, as the very peculiar affection of her father for Lucretia was no secret, the greatest prelates of the church, the *habitués* of the Vatican, the intimates of his holiness, had become her humblest servants, inasmuch that cardinals pressed around to assist her when she dismounted from her horse, and archbishops were jealous of the honour of performing mass in her apartments. It had been requisite, however, for Lucretia to leave Rome to take possession of her new dominions, but as the pope could not long endure the absence of his daughter, he resolved to add to his other donation the city of Nepi, formerly bestowed for his vote upon Ascanio Sforza. Ascanio had necessarily forfeited this city by his adherence to his brother's fortunes; and as the pope was now proceeding thither, he invited his daughter to accompany him, and be present at the festivals consequent upon its reversion to the holy see. The eagerness which Lucretia showed to comply with her father's wishes were rewarded by an additional gift, of the city and territory of Sermoneta, which belonged to the Caëtini. It is true that at present his intention in this respect was not divulged, inasmuch as it was first requisite to get rid of the two possessors of the territory; one being Giacomo Gaëtano, the apostolic protonotary, the other, a youth of great expectations, Prospero Gaëtano; but as they resided at Rome, utterly unsuspicious, the first believing that by his position, and the second, that by his courage, they were both high in the estimation of his holiness, the difficulty in both cases appeared extremely trifling. In fact, as soon as Alexander had returned to Rome, under pretext of some hitherto-undiscovered crime, Giacomo was arrested, imprisoned in the castle of St. Angelo, and there poisoned; and Prospero Gaëtano was strangled in his own house. Owing to these deaths—so sudden, that neither had been enabled to make a will—the pope declared their property to devolve upon the apostolic chamber, which sold them to Lucretia for eighty thousand crowns, a sum which the pope returned to his daughter on the morning of its receipt. Thus, whatever his haste, Cesar found upon his arrival at Rome, that the pope already had preceded him in the path of conquest.

The position of another relative had also greatly advanced during Cesar's residence in France; it was that of Giovanni, nephew of the pope, who to the hour of his death had been one of the most faithful friends of the Duke of Gandia. It was said, indeed, that he owed the favours which his holiness heaped upon him, less to the memory of the brother, than the protection of the sister. There were two reasons which made Giovanni particularly obnoxious to Cesar, and it was whilst secretly resolving not to allow him a long possession of the dignity, that the Duke of Valentinois heard that his cousin had just been appointed cardinal *à latere* of all the Christian world, and had quitted Rome to visit the papal states, with a suite of archbishops, and other dignitaries and knights, that might have done honour to the pope.

Cesar remained but three days at Rome; then, collecting all the forces his holiness could spare, rejoined his army at Euza, and marched immediately upon Imola, which, abandoned by its owners, who had retired to Forli, was obliged to yield, whereupon Cesar advanced on Forli. Here a determined resistance checked his further progress, and this was owing to the courage and noble bearing of a woman. Catherine Sforza, widow of Jerome, and mother of Ottaviano Riario, had shut herself up in this city, and had excited and maintained the courage of the garrison, by placing herself and possessions under its protection. Cesar saw that nothing was to be gained here by a *coup-de-main*, but by a regularly-conducted seige. He made, therefore, the necessary arrangements, and erecting a battery against the point where the walls appeared to him the most defenceless, he desired his artillery to maintain a heavy fire until a breach was effected. Returning from giving these orders, he found in his camp his cousin Giovanni, who, proceeding from Ferrara towards Rome, was unwilling to pass so near without visiting the duke. Cesar welcomed him with the sincerest joy, detained him for three days, and on the fourth invited all his officers and courtiers to a farewell banquet, and having delivered to his cousin some despatches for the pope, he took leave of him with all those marks of affection which had greeted his arrival.

The cardinal had started for Rome on quitting the table, but on reaching Urbino, he found himself seized by so strange and sudden an indisposition, that he was obliged to remain there; rallying a little, however, after a short time, he resumed his journey, yet scarcely had he arrived at Roaca Contrada than he was again so ill that he resolved to proceed no further. Feeling himself again better, and hearing that Forli was taken, and Catherine Sforza a prisoner, he thought of returning to felicitate Cesar upon his victory, but at Fossombrone, although he had substituted a litter for his carriage, he was again constrained to stop for the third time, and for the last—three days afterwards he was dead. His body was conveyed to Rome, and buried without pomp in the church of Santa Maria del Popolo, near the grave of his friend, the Duke of Gandia; and, notwithstanding his high rank, without this event exciting more attention than if the youthful cardinal had never existed: for thus silently disappeared every thing borne away by the awful current of the ambition of that terrible trinity—Alexander, Cesar, and Lucretia.

Almost at the same time Rome was terrified by another murder. Don Giovanni Cerviglione, a gentleman by birth, and a brave soldier, captain of the men-at-arms of his holiness, on returning from supping with Don Eliseo Pignatelli, a knight of St. John, was attacked by sbirri, one of whom demanded his name, and on his reply, seeing that he was not mistaken, stabbed him instantly in his breast, whilst another, with a back stroke of his sword, struck off his head, which rolled at the feet of the body, even before it fell.

The governor of Rome complained of this assassination to the pope, but perceiving by the manner of his holiness he had acted unwisely, and that silence had been more prudent, he stopped the inquiries he had commenced, so that the murderers were never arrested; only it was rumoured at Rome, that during Cesar's short residence there he had obtained an interview with the wife of Cerviglione, who was a Borgia, and that her husband being made acquainted with this fact, was so excited, as even to threaten both her and her paramour; and this had been reported to Cesar, who, calling Michelotto to his aid, had from Forli extended the arm which struck Cerviglione in the midst of Rome.

Another death followed so unexpectedly and immediately upon that of Don Cerviglione, that rumour was not wanting to attribute it, if not to the same cause, at least to the same source. Monsignor Agnelli, of Mantua, archbishop of Cosenza, clerk of the chamber, and vice-legate of Viterbo, having fallen, without any known reason, under the displeasure of his holiness, was poisoned at his own table, where, whilst death glided secretly through his veins, he had spent a great portion of the night in animated conversation with three or four guests, so that, retiring in full health, he was discovered in the morning lying a corpse in his bed. His possessions were subjected to a threefold division: his lands and houses became the property of the Duke of Valentinois. Francesco Borgia, son of Pope Calixtus III., obtained his bishopric; and the place of clerk of the apostolic chamber was sold for five thousand ducats to Ventura Benassai, a Siennese merchant, who, upon payment of the sum into the hands of Alexander, came on the same day to reside at the Vatican. This last death decided also a point upon which hitherto much uncertainty had prevailed. The heirs of Monsignor Agnelli, not submitting to their disinheritance without a murmur, and making some attempts to prevent it, Alexander published a brief, depriving all cardinals and priests of the right and power of bequest, and declaring also that the possessions of the archbishop had now reverted to the holy see.

In the mean time Cesar's victories had received a sudden check. By means of the two hundred thousand ducats yet in his possession, Ludovico Sforza had raised five thousand Burgundians and eight thousand Swiss infantry, with which he had re-entered Lombardy. Trivulce, therefore, had been compelled, in order to oppose the enemy, to recal Yves d'Alègre, and the troops that Louis had placed at the command of Cesar; and he consequently, leaving a part of the papal troops in garrison at Imola and Forli, returned with the rest to Rome. Alexander was desirous that his entry should be considered as a triumph; and hearing that the quarter-masters of the army were but a few miles from the city, he sent messengers, inviting the several ambassadors, princes, cardinals, prelates, Roman barons, and municipal authorities, to proceed to meet the Duke of Valentinois, with all their retinue; and, as the baseness of those who yield is always greater than the pride of those who command, his orders were not only obeyed, but exceeded. The entry of Cesar took place the 26th of February, 1500; and although the jubilee was at its height, the festival of the carnival commenced nevertheless on the morrow, far more noisy and licentious than ever. Under pretence of a masquerade, and as if determined to assume the glory, the genius, and success of the great man whose name he bore, he resolved to represent the triumph of Cesar in the Place Navone, which was ordinarily reserved for the festivities of the carnival. He set out, therefore, from this spot, and traversed the streets of Rome, with the costume and ancient chariots of the ancients, standing erect in his car, arrayed in the purple of the emperors, his head crowned with the golden laurel, and surrounded by lictors, soldiers, and standard-bearers, whose flags bore this device, *Aut Cæsar, aut nihil!*

On the last Sunday in Lent the pope conferred upon him that dignity which had so long been the object of his ambition. Cesar was declared general and gonfalonier of the holy church. Meanwhile Sforza had crossed the Alps and the Lake of Como, amid the acclamations of his former subjects, who no longer cherished the enthusiasm which the French army and the promises of Louis XII. had first excited. These demonstrations were so very unequivocal, that Trivulce, considering that the position of the French garrison at Milan was insecure, withdrew them towards Novarra. The result proved the correctness of his opinion, for no sooner did the Milanese perceive the preparations for his departure, than a general excitement prevailed, and the streets were filled with armed men. It was requisite to cut through the still-increasing crowd, with sword in hand and lance in rest; and hardly did the French clear the gates, than the people inundated the open country, following their retreat with hootings and cries, to the banks of the Tesino. Trivulce left at Novarra four hundred lances, and more than three thousand Swiss, that Yves d'Alègre had brought to him from the Romagna, and advanced with the remainder of his army to Mortara, where he halted until he should be joined by the reinforcements he had required from Louis. Ludovico Sforza and his brother Ascanio in the meanwhile had entered Milan, amid the acclamations of the city. No time was lost by either; and availing themselves of the present enthusiasm in their behalf, Ascanio undertook the siege of the citadel, whilst Ludovico passed the Tesino, to attack Novarra. The besiegers and besieged were now fellow-countrymen, for Yves d'Alègre had barely three hundred French, and Ludovico five hundred Italians. The truth was, that for six years the Swiss had formed the infantry of Europe, and, money in hand, all the continental powers had raised their levies from their mountains. The rude descendants of William Tell, thus put up to auction by nations, and led by their various engagements, from their bleak and barren mountains to the most beautiful and productive countries, even whilst maintaining their ancient courage, had now lost, by contact with foreigners, that firmness of principle which had caused them to be so long cited as models of honour and of good faith, and had degenerated into a kind of merchandise, always ready to sell themselves, without the slightest hesitation, to the highest bidder.

The French were the first sufferers from a venality, which subsequently became so fatal to Ludovico Sforza. For the Swiss garrison of Novarra having contrived an intercourse with those of their countrymen who formed the outposts of the ducal army, and understanding the latter, who as yet were unacquainted with the exhaustion of the finances of Ludovico, were better kept and paid than themselves, engaged to surrender the city, and to enlist under the Milanese colours, on condition of receiving the same pay. This offer, as may be supposed, Ludovico readily accepted. Novarra, the citadel excepted, was given up, and the enemy was recruited by three thousand men. But instead of immediately marching with his reinforcement upon Mortara, Ludovico committed the error of besieging the citadel of Novarra. The consequence was, Louis XII., apprised of the dangers of his position, through the courier dispatched by Trivulce, had hastened the departure of the French troops, and directed Cardinal d'Amboise to station himself at Asto, and hurry forward the recruitment of the army. The cardinal found here already a division of three thousand men; La Tremouille brought him fifteen hundred lances, and six thousand French infantry; the Bailli of Dijon arrived with six thousand Swiss, so that together with the troops Trivulce had under him at Mortara, Louis XII. was at the head of the finest army that a king of France had ever raised and sent into the plains beyond the Alps. By a skilful march, before even Ludovico was aware of its being assembled or of its strength, this army threw itself suddenly between Novarra and Milan, cutting off from the duke all communication with his capital; and, in spite of his inferiority, he was consequently obliged to prepare for an immediate engagement.

But whilst both parties were preparing for a decisive action, the Diet, informed that the hired troops of the same cantons were about to slaughter each other, sent an order to the Swiss serving in both armies to annul their engagements, and return home. Moreover, during the two months' interval between the surrender of Novarra and the arrival of the French army before that city, affairs had greatly changed, owing to the exhausted state of Ludovico's finances. Fresh conferences had taken place at the outposts, and this time, by favour of the money sent by Louis XII., it was the Swiss in the service of the King of France who found themselves better kept and paid than their compatriots. These honourable Helvetians, since they no longer fought for liberty, knew too well the value of their blood to suffer one drop to be shed, if that drop were not paid for in gold; the result was, those who had betrayed Yves d'Alègre, did not hesitate to deceive Ludovico, and whilst the recruits raised by the Bailli of Dijon, notwithstanding the injunctions of the Diet, remained faithful to the French colours, the auxiliaries of Ludovico declared that in fighting against them they should be considered as guilty of rebellion, and would expose themselves to a punishment, which the immediate receipt of their pay, now due, could alone induce them to incur. The duke, who had spent his very last ducat, and was cut off from his capital to which only victory could open him the way, not only promised their arrears of pay, but twice its amount, if they would but join him in a final effort. This promise was unfortunately contingent upon the doubtful chances of a battle; the Swiss declared they loved their countrymen too much to think of shedding their blood without their pay, and revered the Diet too much to disobey its orders; and that therefore Sforza must not longer rely upon them, inasmuch as they had decided upon immediately returning to their cantons. The duke perceiving that every thing was lost, made a last appeal to their honour, and besought them at least to ensure his personal safety in the capitulation they were about to make. But they replied that such a clause would render the capitulation, if not impossible, at least void of those advantages they had a right to expect, and upon which they reckoned as compensation for their arrears of pay. Yet as if they were at last moved by his entreaties, they offered to conceal him, under their uniform and in their ranks.

This proposal was purposely illusory. Sforza was old, and short of stature, and could not escape recognition amidst men, the eldest of whom was not thirty, nor the shortest less than five feet six inches high. But it was his last resource, and without entirely rejecting it he sought by its modification to use it with success. He disguised himself, therefore, as a Franciscan friar, and, mounted upon a bad horse, passed himself off for their chaplain. Galeas de San Severino, who commanded under him, and his two brothers, being tall, assumed the uniform of the soldiers, hoping thus to escape unobserved in the Swiss ranks. They had hardly done so when the duke heard that a capitulation had been signed between Trivulce and the Swiss; but no stipulation being made for the safety of the duke, or for that of his officers, they were obliged, as their only chance of escape, to trust to their disguise. The army began to defile, but the Swiss, after having made money by their blood, now thought to sell their honour. The French received information of the concealment of Sforza and his generals in their ranks; they were all recognised, and Sforza was taken by La Tremouille himself. It was said the price paid for this act of treason was the city of Bellinzona, which belonged to the French, but which the Swiss seized upon in their retreat, without any effort being made by Louis XII. for its repossession. When Ascanio Sforza, who had remained at Milan, heard of this base desertion and betrayal of his brother, he resolved upon flight, before, through one of those sudden changes so familiar to the populace, he might be made prisoner by the former subjects of his brother, to whom the idea might occur to purchase their pardon at the price of his liberty. He escaped, therefore, by night, accompanied by the principal chiefs of the Ghibelline nobility, and took the road to Plazenza, to regain the kingdom of Naples. Upon reaching Rivolta, he remembered that a friend of his youth, and one upon whom in the days of his power he had conferred much wealth, resided there; and as both himself and his companions were extremely fatigued, he resolved to solicit his hospitality for the night. Conrad received them with the liveliest joy, and placed his house and servants at his disposal; but scarcely had they retired to rest, when he sent a courier to Plazenza, to acquaint Carlo Orsino, who commanded the Venetian garrison, that he was ready to deliver up the cardinal Ascanio and the principal chiefs of the Milanese army. Orsino, unwilling to trust another with a matter of so much importance, set out immediately with twenty-five horsemen, and, surrounding the house, entered the room in which Ascanio and his companions slept, who, thus surprised, surrendered themselves without resistance. They were conducted to Venice, and subsequently delivered up to Louis, who now detained as prisoners Ludovico and Ascanio; a legitimate nephew of the great Francesco Sforza, whose name was Hermes; two natural sons, Alexander and Contino; and lastly, Francesco, son of the unfortunate Giovanni Galeasso, who had been poisoned by his uncle. Louis XII., resolved to crush the family at one blow, forced Francesco to enter into a convent, threw Contino, Alexander, and Hermes into prison; confined Ascanio in the tower of Bourges: and lastly, after transferring the unhappy Ludovico from the fortress of Pierre Encise au Lys St. George, he consigned him definitively to the castle of Loches, where he died after a captivity of ten years, regretting to the last hour of his life the moment when, misled by his ambition, he had paved the way for the invasion of Italy by the French. The news of the fall of Ludovico and of his family caused the greatest joy at Rome, for, consolidating the power of the French in the Milanese, it established also that of the holy see in the Romagna, since no further obstacles existed to the conquests meditated by Cesar. The couriers, therefore, who brought the news were liberally recompensed; and soon the cries of "France, France!" and of "Orso, Orso!" on behalf of France and the Orsini, were echoed in the streets, which were illuminated as though Constantinople or Jerusalem had been taken.

Money alone was now wanting to ensure the success of the vast projects that the pope and his son based upon the friendship and alliance of Louis XII.; but Alexander was not a man to endure any such distress. It is true the profits arising from the sale of benefices were exhausted, that the ordinary and extraordinary imposts of the year were already anticipated, that the inheritance of the cardinals and prelates was now almost unproductive, inasmuch as the richest had been poisoned; other resources remained, not the less efficacious because less employed. The first was to circulate throughout Christendom the rumour of an approaching invasion by the Turks; that the pope was well aware that summer would not pass away before Bajazet had disembarked two powerful armies, one in the Romagna, the other in Calabria; and thereupon he published two bulls, one to raise a tenth upon all ecclesiastical revenues, the other to extort a similar sum from the Jews; and these missives contained the severest excommunications against all those who refused to submit, or attempted the slightest opposition. The second was the sale of indulgences, a resource hitherto unknown. These indulgences had weighed heavily on those whose health or affairs had precluded their arrival at Rome during the jubilee; but by this gracious expedient of the pope the journey was now unnecessary, and for the third of the sum it had previously cost their sins were as fully and satisfactorily remitted as though the faithful had complied with all the conditions of their pilgrimage. For the collection of this tax, if it might be so called, a perfect army of collectors was established, of which Ludovico de la Torre was appointed chief. The sums thus raised and paid to Alexander were incalculable; some idea may be formed of them by the fact, that the territory of Venice alone paid seven hundred and ninety-nine thousand pounds weight of gold. But as the Turks made actually some warlike demonstrations on the side of Hungary, which the Venetians feared might be the precursor of an attack on them, they sent to demand succour from the pope; whereupon his holiness decreed that throughout the papal states an "Ave Maria" should be chanted at midnight, to pray that God would defend the republic from the threatened danger. This was the extent of the aid the Venetians obtained in exchange for the seven hundred and ninety-nine thousand pounds weight of gold they had transmitted to the holy see. But, as if the crimes of Alexander had moved Divine Justice to warn him from the evil of his way, upon the vigil of St. Peter, as he approached the Campanile, proceeding to the place where the papel benediction is bestowed, an enormous bar of iron fell suddenly from it at his feet; and, as if one warning were not sufficient, on the morrow, being St. Peter's day, whilst the pope was in one of his usual apartments, with Cardinal Capuano and Monseigneur Poto, he saw through the open window so dense a mass of clouds gathering around, that, anticipating a tempest, he ordered the cardinal to let them instantly be closed. He was scarcely obeyed when a furious blast of wind struck the highest chimney of the Vatican, which fell upon the roof, and, breaking through this, carried with it a portion of the upper floor into the chamber where the pope and his attendants were. Upon this fall, which shook the palace, and the noise they heard behind them, the Cardinal Capuano and Monseigneur Poto turned round, and, seeing the apartment choked with dust and covered with fragments of the building, rushed to the windows, exclaiming, "The pope is dead! the pope is dead!" whereupon the guards entered, and found three men stretched among the rubbish, one dead, the others dying. They were a Siennese gentleman and two commensals of the Vatican, who, passing through the upper apartments, had been struck down by the falling bricks around them. In the meanwhile all search for Alexander was fruitless, and, not replying to the frequent shouts of his name, the belief of his death was confirmed, and was soon circulated throughout the city. But after an interval, in recovering from a swoon, they heard his groans, and he was then found, still confused by the blow, and wounded, though not dangerously, in many parts of his body. He had been saved by a kind of miracle; the beam had been broken in the centre, and had left each of its extremities in the side walls; one of these had thus formed a roof above the papel throne, so that his holiness, who was seated thereon at the instant of its fall, had been protected by the vault it formed. The two contradictory statements of the sudden death and the miraculous preservation of the pope were soon disseminated throughout Rome; and the Duke of Valentinois, alarmed by the effect that the slightest accident to his father would exercise upon his interests, hastened to the Vatican, unable to feel reassured of his safety but by his presence. As for Alexander, he wished by a public act to render thanks to Heaven for the protection it had accorded, and immediately proceeded, accompanied by a numerous escort, to the church de Santa-Maria-del-Popolo, in which were interred the bodies of the Duke of Gandia and Giovanni Borgia: whether he was led so to do by a momentary gleam of devotion still lingering at his heart, or whether he was drawn thither by the impious love which he felt for his former mistress, Vanozza, who, beneath the form of the Madonna, was exposed to the veneration of the faithful in a chapel to the left of the high altar. On reaching the altar his holiness presented to the church a magnificent chalice, within which were three hundred gold crowns, which the Cardinal of Sienna, to the great gratification of the papal vanity, exposed to the view of all in a patina of silver.

Before quitting Rome, to undertake the conquest of the Romagna, the Duke of Valentinois had reflected how useless both to him and to his father had now become the marriage once so earnestly desired between Lucretia and Alphonso; nor was this all. The present repose of Louis XII. in Lombardy was evidently no more than a halt, and Milan a mere stage on the road to Naples. Moreover, this union might possibly become a source of distrust to Louis, inasmuch as it made the nephew of his enemy the son-in-law of his ally. Instead of which, Alphonso dead, Lucretia might remarry some powerful Seigneur de la Marche, du Ferrarais, or de la Bresse, who might aid her brother in the conquest of the Romagna.

Alphonso became, therefore, not only dangerous as a connexion, but useless as an ally, which latter to a Borgia was a crime,—his death was decided. In the meantime the husband of Lucretia, who had been long aware of the risk he incurred by residing near his fearful father-in-law, had retired to Naples. But as with their habitual dissimulation, neither Alexander nor Cesar had in any way justified his suspicions, they abated, when he received an invitation from the pope and his son, to take part in a grand bull fight after the Spanish mode, to be given upon occasion of the duke's departure. In the precarious situation of the house of Naples, so lately ejected, so recently restored to the throne, it was the policy of Alphonso to give Alexander no excuse for enmity: he was anxious on this account, not to refuse without an adequate motive, and therefore set out for Rome. But as the pope and Cesar did not consider it desirable to consult Lucretia in this affair, inasmuch as upon several occasions she had exhibited a ridiculous attachment to her husband, she was allowed to remain undisturbed in her government at Spoleto. Alphonso was received at Rome with every demonstration of sincere friendship, and was lodged at the Vatican in the apartments he had before occupied with Lucretia. The lists were prepared in the place of St. Peter, the streets of which had been barricaded, whilst the adjoining houses were fitted up with galleries for the spectators, the pope and his court occupying the balconies of the Vatican.

The festival began with hired bull-fighters. When they had exhibited their strength and skill, Alphonso of Arragon and Cesar Borgia entered the arena, and as a proof of the good feeling that existed between them, it was agreed that the bull which pursued Cesar, should be slain by Alphonso, and the contrarywise as regarded Alphonso. Cesar entered the lists on horseback alone, leaving them and Alphonso retiring, but ready to rejoin him when he should judge his presence to be required. At the same time the bull was let in, and instantly covered with darts and arrows, to which some fireworks were attached, and these exploding irritated the animal to such a degree, that, after rolling on the earth, he arose maddened, and rushed instantly at Cesar, still awaiting him in the arena. It was then he displayed that consummate skill which made him one of the most accomplished horsemen of the period. Nevertheless his skill had been of no avail against such an adversary in so limited a space, where his only resource was flight, if, at the moment when the animal gained upon him, Alphonso had not suddenly appeared, shaking in his left-hand a red cloak, and holding in his right a long and thin Arragonese sword. It was time to do so, the bull was but a few steps from Cesar, and his danger seemed so imminent, that a cry of fear was heard from one of the windows; but upon seeing Alphonso the enraged beast suddenly stopped, and after throwing up the dust with his hind feet, pawing the earth, and lashing his sides with his tail, with bloodshot eyes, and tearing up the earth with his horns, he rushed upon him. Alphonso quietly awaited his approach, and then, when within three steps of him, sprung quickly on one side, holding towards him his sword, which was suddenly sheathed up to the hilt; and immediately the bull, arrested in full career, remained for a moment motionless, yet quivering in every fibre, then fell upon his knees, breathed heavily, and lay dead upon the spot where he had been struck. So ably and rapidly was the blow struck, that applause burst from all around; as for Cesar, he had remained unconcerned on horseback, endeavouring only to discover from whom and whence the cry proceeded, which had betrayed so marked an interest in him, and he soon recognised one of the ladies of honour of Elizabeth Duchess of Urbino, then betrothed to Giovanni Baptisti Carracciolo, captain-general of the Venetian republic.

Another bull was now let in, and excited in the same manner, with darts and lighted arrows, and like the former, upon seeing the horseman, rushed instantly upon him. An extraordinary race now commenced, during which so rapid were the movements, it was impossible know whether the horse pursued the bull, or the bull the horse;

nevertheless, after a few rounds, fleet as was the Andalusian steed which bore Alphonso, the bull began to gain upon him, so much so, that there was scarce the distance of two lances between them, when Cesar in his turn suddenly appeared armed with a two handed sword, and at the instant when the bull, now pressing upon the horse's flank, rushed past him, he raised it on high, and striking downwards with such force, that the blade, gleamed around like a flash of lightning, at one blow struck off its head, whilst the body, still borne onwards by its impetus, fell ten steps from him in the lists. This was so unexpected, had been executed with so much skill, that it was witnessed and greeted with applause almost bordering on frenzy. But Cesar, as if amid his triumph he was mindful only of the cry caused by the danger he had been first exposed to, lifted up the head of the bull, and giving it to one of his squires, desired him, as an act of homage upon his part, to lay it at the feet of the beautiful Venetian who had expressed so lively an interest in his behalf. This festival, besides the triumph that it had won for the combatants, had another object, it was to show the intimate feeling which existed between them, so that, whatever might occur to Alphonso, no one could accuse Cesar,—nor Alphonso, of any evil accruing to Cesar. There was a grand supper at the Vatican; Alphonso was elegantly dressed, and towards ten in the evening quitted the detached wing in which he resided, to enter that in which the pope's apartments were situated; but the door dividing the two courts was closed, and remained unopened to his repeated knockings. He then thought of going round by the place of St. Peter; and, unattended, proceeded along the dark streets which led to the staircase ascending to it, when hardly had his foot rested on their first steps, ere he was attacked by a troop of armed men. Before he could draw his sword, he had received five wounds in different parts of his body, and falling senseless, his assassins, supposing him to be dead, immediately reascended the steps, and finding in the place of St. Peter a guard of forty horsemen who awaited them, quietly left the city under their protection, by the gate of Portese. Alphonso was found by some passers by, who bore him in a dying state to his apartments in the Torre-Nova.

Upon receiving information of this the pope and Cesar appeared so afflicted that they quitted their guests, and repaired immediately to Alphonso, as if to assure themselves whether his wounds were mortal or not, and the following morning, to avert any suspicions that might incline towards them, they arrested Francesco Gazella, his maternal uncle, who had accompanied his nephew to Rome. Convicted by suborned testimony, Gazella was beheaded. But the work had been only half performed; however diverted, there was yet such a sufficiency of suspicion, that no one dared to name the real assassins;—and Alphonso was not dead, for owing to the excellence of his constitution and the skill of his attendants, who, believing the grief of the pope and of his son to be sincere, had exerted their utmost skill in his favour, he was now advancing towards convalescence;—moreover Lucretia, hearing of the attack upon her husband, had set out to join him, with the intention of nursing him herself. There was therefore no time to lose,—Cesar desired the attendance of Michelotto. "The same night," says Burchard, "Don Alphonso, who was not willing to die of his wounds, was strangled in his bed." The following morning he was buried, if not with the pomp due to his rank, yet with becoming respect. The same evening Lucretia arrived; she too well knew the character both of her father and brother to enable them to deceive her; and although the Duke of Valentinois, on the death of Don Alphonso, arrested not only his physicians, but a poor valet, she nevertheless saw from whence the blow proceeded, and fearful that the grief she now really felt might deprive her of the confidence of her relations, she retired to Nepi with her household, to pass the period of her mourning in that city.

The affairs of the family being thus arranged, and Lucretia once more a widow, and consequently enabled to further the new political alliances of the pope, Cesar remained at Rome, only for the purpose of receiving the ambassadors of France and Venice. But as their arrival was slightly delayed, and as the expense of the last festivals had in some degree exhausted the papal treasury, Alexander created another batch of twelve cardinals, whose promotion had a twofold result;—first, that of obtaining six hundred thousand ducats; and secondly, of securing him a decided majority in the sacred college. The ambassadors at last arrived; the first, M. de Villeneuve, who had formerly come in the name of the King of France to visit Cesar, on the point of entering into Rome, was accosted by a man in a mask, who expressed to him the pleasure he felt upon his arrival. This man was Cesar, who unwilling to be recognized, after a short conference withdrew, but without removing his disguise. M. de Villeneuve entered the city behind him, and found at the gate del Popolo the envoys of the different continental powers, even those of Spain and Naples, whose sovereigns, it is true, were not yet at open war with France, although commencing the withdrawal of their friendly relations with that court. Afraid of being compromised, the latter restricted themselves to merely saying to their colleague of France, "You are welcome, sir." The master of the ceremonies, surprised at so concise a compliment, asked them whether they had any thing further to say; and upon receiving a negative, M. de Villeneuve turned his back upon them, adding, that to those who had nothing to say, no answer was due; then placing himself between the Archbishop of Reggio, the governor of Rome, and the Archbishop of Ragusa, he proceeded to the palace of the Holy Apostles, which had been prepared for his reception. A few days afterwards Maria Georgi, ambassador extraordinary from the Venetian republic, arrived. He was charged not only to regulate with the pope the immediate interests of the state, but also to bear to Alexander and Cesar the title and inscription of their names, as noble Venetians, a favour they had long earnestly desired, not for its mere honour, but the real influence it could secure them. The pope next proceeded to bestow the hats upon those to whom he had sold the cardinalship, after which, as there was no other business to delay the departure of the Duke of Valentinois, he remained only to complete a loan with a rich banker named Augustino Chigi, brother of Lorenzo, who had been killed by the fall of the chimney at the Vatican, and then departed for the Romagna, accompanied by Vitellozzo Vitelli, by Giovanni Paolo Baglioni, and by Giacomo de Santa Croce, then his friends, and shortly afterwards his victims. His first enterprize was against Pesaro; a piece of brotherly attention, of which Giovanni Sforza well understood the consequences; for, instead of attempting to defend his territories by arms, or to contend for them by negotiations, and unwilling to expose the beautiful country he had so long governed to the vengeance of an irritated enemy, he committed himself to the affectionate fidelity of his subjects, in the hopes of some future change of fortune, and fled to Dalmatia. Malatesta of Rimini did the same, and Cesar, leaving garrisons in these cities, had advanced towards Faenza. This city was then under the government of Astor Manfredi, a brave youth of eighteen, who, although abandoned by the Bentivogli and by his relations, the Venetians and Florentines his allies, resolved, knowing the affection of his subjects for his family, to defend himself to the last. Upon hearing that the duke was advancing against him, he hastily assembled all those of his vassals who were capable of bearing arms, and the few soldiers who were willing to enlist in his service, and having collected provision and military stores, he shut himself up with his small force in the city. These preparations caused no disquiet to Cesar; he had an excellent army, composed of the best troops of France and Italy, and who, excluding himself, reckoned amongst their chiefs, Paolo and Giulio Orsini, Vitellozzo, Vitelli, and Paolo Baglioni, the best captains of the day. Having surveyed the place, he began the siege by encamping between the two rivers, the Anima and the Marziano, placing his artillery upon the side which looks towards Forli, where the besieged had also erected a heavy battery.

After a few days, the breach being practicable, the duke directed an attack to be made, which as an example to his soldiers he himself commanded. But notwithstanding his courage and that of his captains, Astor Manfredi made so stout a defence, that the besiegers were repulsed with great loss, leaving in the ditches of the city Honorio Savello, one of their best chiefs. In spite of the courage and the devotion of its defenders, Faenza could not have long withstood the attacks of so powerful an army, had not winter advanced to its relief. Overtaken by the severity of the season, without shelter for his troops, and unable even to procure wood for fire, as the peasantry had laid waste the country, the duke was obliged to raise the siege, and to quarter his army in the adjacent cities, ready to open the campaign upon the return of spring; for Cesar, who could not endure that a small city, accustomed to a long peace, governed by a minor, and deprived of every ally, should thus check his progress, had sworn to take merciless revenge for this delay. He divided, therefore, his army into three divisions, the first being quartered at Imola, the second at Forli, posting himself with the third at Cesena, which, from a third-rate city, found itself suddenly changed into one of luxury and splendour. Indeed, to the active mind of Cesar, wars or festivals were always requisite; the war being suspended, the festivals commenced, sumptuous and exciting as he could make them; the days were passed in games and cavalcades, the nights in balls and debauchery, for the most beautiful women of the Romagna had arrived to form a seraglio for the victor, that the sultan of Egypt or of Constantinople might have envied.

CHAPTER VII.

It was in one of these excursions, which, surrounded by his courtiers and titled courtezans, the Duke of Valentinois made in the environs of the city, that he saw advancing from the road to Rimini, a retinue sufficiently numerous to induce him to believe that it accompanied some person of rank. And soon remarking that this was a lady, he advanced, and recognised in her the attendant of the Duchess d'Urbino, who had attracted his attention by the cry she had uttered when believing him to be endangered during the bull-fight. She was then betrothed to Giovanni Carracciolo, general of the Venetians, and Elizabeth of Gonzagua, her patroness and godmother, had now sent her, under a becoming escort, to Venice, where the marriage was to be solemnized. At Rome, Cesar had been much struck by her extreme beauty, which feeling this interview served but to increase, and from that moment he resolved to possess her, reproaching himself for the indifference he had hitherto evinced. In consequence he addressed her as an old acquaintance, inquired if it were her intention to remain any time at Cesena, and understood from her that she should only pass through, as, being impatiently expected, she allowed as few delays as possible, and was anxious to reach Forli, where she should sleep that night. This was all Cesar wished to know: he called Michelotto, and whispered some words to him unheard by any body else. The cortége proceeded on its way as the fair betrothed had stated, making but a momentary halt at Cesena; and although the day was far advanced, departing immediately for Forli; but hardly had it advanced a mile, when it was surrounded by a troop of horsemen from Cesena. Although inferior in numbers, the soldiers of the escort nevertheless defended their charge, but some being cut down, others fled, and as the lady meanwhile had descended from her litter, and attempted to escape, the leader of the horsemen seized her in his arms, placed her before him upon his horse, and, ordering his soldiers to return to Cesena, he rode instantly across the country, and was soon lost in the obscurity of the night.

The account of this was conveyed to Carracciolo by one of the fugitives who had recognised in the horsemen the soldiers of the Duke of Valentinois. At first he seemed as one who understands not what is said, so difficult was it to give credence to a tale so fraught with pain; he again required its recital, then, after remaining for a few moments motionless, as though stunned by a thunderbolt, he suddenly started from this unnatural stupor and rushed towards the ducal palace, where the Doge Barberigo and the Council of Ten were already assembled, and advancing amid them, at the very instant they received the intelligence of this outrage of the duke, he exclaimed, "Most illustrious senators, resolved to risk in private revenge that life it was my hope to have dedicated to the service of the republic, I appear now before you to bid you respectfully farewell. I have been injured in the noblest feelings of the heart—my honour. I have been robbed of that which is most dear to me of all I possessed—my wife; and he who has done this is the most perfidious, the most sacrilegious, the most infamous of men—the Duke of Valentinois. Be not offended, most illustrious senators, if thus I characterize a man who boasts to be of your nobility, as honoured by your protection. It is not so, he lies; his baseness and his crimes render him undeserving of both, as he is unworthy of that life of which I will deprive him by this sword. It is true, that a man—the incarnation of sacrilege, by his birth a fratricide, the usurper of another's rights, an oppressor of the innocent, the assassin of the highway, a man who violates every law, that even which is sacred among nations the most barbarous, the law of hospitality; a man who, in his own territories, waylays and attacks a woman; one who, on the contrary, had not only a right to claim the respect due to her sex and rank, but also the homage due to the republic, whose general I am—such a man, it is true, I repeat it, deserves death, but by another hand than mine. But as he who ought to punish, instead of being prince and judge, is a father as guilty as the son, I will myself seek out the author of this crime, and I will sacrifice my life, not only to revenge my own wrong, and the blood of the guiltless, but for the safety of this republic, at whose destruction he aims, when he has accomplished that of the other princes of Italy." The doge and senators, already aware of the event which had thus brought Carracciolo before them, listened to his discourse with feelings of the deepest interest and indignation—for, as he had truly said, the republic was insulted in this injury to its general,—they swore, therefore, by their honour, that if he would confide in them instead of yielding to his thirst for revenge, of which he would assuredly be the victim, either his wife should be restored uninjured to his arms, or they themselves would exact redress in proportion to the injury he had sustained. As a proof of their earnestness, the tribunal immediately despatched Luigi Manenti, secretary of the Council of Ten, to Imola, where, it was said, the duke then was, to express the extreme displeasure of the republic at this outrage. They, at the same time also, had an interview with the French ambassador, requesting him to proceed himself with Manenti to the Duke of Valentinois, to demand, in the name of Louis XII., the immediate freedom of the lady who had been thus waylaid. The envoys proceeded to Imola, where they found Cesar, who listened to their demands with every indication of surprise, declaring himself free, even from the imputation of the crime, the authors of which he authorised Manenti and the ambassador to pursue, declaring that he too would cause the most active inquiries to be made. He exhibited so much good faith that for a moment the envoys were deceived, and commenced the strictest investigation. For this purpose they visited the place where it occurred, and the following was the information they obtained:—The dead and wounded had been found upon the high road; a horseman had been seen carrying away a woman at full gallop across the country. A peasant, returning from the fields, had seen him appearing and disappearing, like a shadow, in the direction of a lonely house. An old woman declared she saw him enter it; yet ere the following morning the house had disappeared as if by enchantment; the plough had passed over it, and none could tell what had become of her they sought, since the inmates of the house and the house itself were gone. Manenti and the ambassador returned, related what the duke had said, what they had done, and the fruitless results of their inquiries. No one doubted that Cesar was guilty of the crime, but none could prove the fact; the council, therefore, engaged in a war with the Turks, were unwilling to commit themselves with the pope, and forbad Carracciolo to seek redress;

so that by degrees the circumstance died away, and was soon forgotten. Upon the return of spring, Cesar reassembled his troops, and again led them to the attack upon Faenza. Another breach was effected, whereupon he ordered a general assault, which again he headed; but notwithstanding his courage, and the brave support of his soldiers, they were repulsed by Astor, who led on his men to the defence of the ramparts, from the heights of which the women rolled down stones and trunks of trees upon their assailants. After an hour's contest, Cesar was forced to retreat, leaving two thousand men in the ditches of the fortification, and amongst these Valentino Farnese, one of his bravest condottieri. Then, as neither excommunications nor assaults availed him, the duke converted the siege into a rigorous blockade; and as he had remarked some symptoms of a revolt at Cesena, he placed there as governor Ramiro d'Arco, a man of the most remorseless resolution, with the power of life and death over its inhabitants.

At the expiration of a month, during which Faenza endured all the horrors of famine, commissioners arrived at the duke's camp to propose terms of capitulation. Cesar, pressed by his extensive designs in the Romagna, listened very willingly to their proposals, and it was agreed that the city should surrender upon condition that the lives and property of its inhabitants should be spared; that Astor Manfredi should be allowed to retire where he pleased, and should still retain his patrimonial revenue. These terms were scrupulously observed as regarded the city, but Cesar, upon meeting Astor, struck by his appearance, which, from his youth, was rather feminine, detained him in his camp, paying him all the respect due to a prince, and appearing to have for him the sincerest friendship. But Astor, like the betrothed of Carracciolo, soon after disappeared, no one knew where; Cesar even appeared uneasy, but intimated he had probably escaped, and sent couriers after him in every direction. A year after this, in the Tiber, a little above the castle of St. Angelo, the body of a beautiful female, whose hands were tied behind her back, and that also of a handsome youth, around whose neck yet hung the bow-string with which he had been strangled, were found. The woman was the betrothed of Carracciolo, the youth was Astor, for a year victims of the lust of Cesar, who had them then thrown into the Tiber. By the conquest of Faenza he obtained the title of Duke of Romagna, which was first bestowed upon him in full consistory by the pope, and next ratified by the King of Hungary, the republic of Venice, and the Kings of Castile and Portugal.

The news of this ratification reached Rome, on the anniversary of the foundation of the eternal city, which caused it to be celebrated with increased splendour. But the ambition of the duke encreased as it was gratified. No sooner master of Faenza, than stimulated by the Mariscotti, the ancient enemies of the Bentivogli, he meditated the conquest of Bologna, but Giovanni de Bentivoglio, whose ancestry from time immemorial had possessed the city, had not only made every requisite preparation for a protracted defence, but had also placed himself under the protection of France; and no sooner did he hear that Cesar was advancing upon Bologna with his army, than he despatched an envoy to Louis, to request the fulfilment of his promises. Louis fulfilled it with his accustomed honour; and when Cesar reached Bologna, he was met by a request from the King of France to abandon his enterprise against his ally Bentivoglio;

but not being inclined to retreat without compensation for his march, he proposed terms to which Bentivoglio acceded, too happy to be freed from his enemy at the price demanded, the cession of Castel-Bolenese, a fortress situated between Imola and Faenza, a tribute of nine thousand ducats, and the maintenance in Cesar's service of one hundred men-at-arms, and two thousand foot soldiers. In return for these advantages, the duke acquainted Bentivoglio that he was indebted for this visit to the suggestions of the Mariscotti; then reinforced by the contingent of his new ally, he took the road to Tuscany, but was hardly out of sight, when Bentivoglio closed the gates of Bologna, directed his son Hermes to assassinate with his own hand Agamemnon Mariscotti, while he himself massacred thirty-four of his brother's sons, daughters, or nephews, and two hundred of their relatives and friends. This butchery was effected by the noblest of the youth of Bologna, whom Bentivoglio compelled to steep their hands in blood, the more strongly to attach them to him, through fear of reprisals.

The designs of Cesar against Florence were now no longer to be concealed; early in January he had sent to Pisa Regnier de la Sassetta, and Pietro de Gamba Corti, with a powerful force; and the conquest of the Romagna effected, he despatched Oliverotto da Fermo thither also with additional detachments. He had also reinforced his army by the levies from Bologna; he had been rejoined by Vitellozzo Vitelli, lord of Citta di Castello, and by the Orsini at the head of two or three thousand men, so that exclusive of those at Pisa, he had now seven hundred men-at-arms, and five thousand foot soldiers. Yet notwithstanding this, upon entering into Tuscany, he declared his intentions were entirely pacific, that he sought only to pass through the territory of the republic upon his return to Rome, and offered to pay upon the spot for whatever provisions his army might require. But when he had passed the defiles of the mountains, and had reached Barberino, knowing then that the city was in his power, and that its approaches were defenceless, he placed a price upon the friendship he had offered, and began to impose, rather than to submit to conditions. These were, that the republic should recall Pietro de Medici, the relation and ally of the Orsini; that six burgessess of the city, to be named by Vitellozzo, should be delivered up to him, that their death might atone for the unjust execution of Paolo Vitelli by the Florentines; that the senate should engage to withhold all succour from the lord of Piombino; and that, lastly, Cesar should be engaged in the service of the state, with a pay in proportion to his claims. But while things were at this point, he received the commands of the King of France to join him with his army against Naples, the conquest of which he was now enabled to undertake. He dared not refuse compliance, but as the Florentines were ignorant of this summons to quit Tuscany, he fixed the price of his retreat at the payment of a sum of thirty-six thousand ducats a year, for which he engaged to maintain three hundred men-at-arms, always ready to defend the republic upon any emergency that might arise. Hurried as he was by his engagements with the King of France, he yet hoped to conquer the territory of Piombino, and to carry its capital by a sudden assault, but he found that Giacomo d'Appiano was prepared to meet him, and had already laid waste the country around, destroying even the fountains which might supply water to his troops. But, nevertheless, in a few days he was master of Severito, Scarlino, the island of Elba, and Pianosa, but he was checked by the citadel, which offered a determined resistance: and as Louis XII. continued his march towards Rome, he was obliged to quit his army, leaving Vitellozzo and Baglioni to continue the siege. Louis now advanced towards Naples, not with the thoughtless impetuosity of Charles VIII., but with his habitual circumspection. Besides his alliances with Florence and Rome, he had concluded a secret treaty with Ferdinand the Catholic, who put forth, through the line of Duras, the same claims upon the kingdom of Naples as Louis through the house of Anjou. By this treaty, the kings divided their spoil; Louis was to possess Naples and the Abruzzi, with the title of King of Naples and of Jerusalem; Ferdinand was to obtain Apulia and Calabria, with the title of duke of those provinces; the investiture of which they were both to receive from the pope. The French army, which was now joined by the Duke of Valentinois, was composed of one thousand lances, four thousand Swiss, and six thousand Gascons, whilst Phillip de Robenstein conducted by sea an additional force of six thousand five hundred men. Against this force, the King of Naples had only seven hundred men-at-arms, six hundred light horse, and six thousand foot soldiers to bring into the field, but he relied much upon Gonzalvo de Cordova, who was to rejoin him at Gaëta, and to whom he had, therefore, opened all the fortresses of Calabria.

But this confidence in his faithless ally was not of long duration; upon arriving at Rome the French and Spanish ambassadors presented to the pope the secret treaty signed at Grenada the 11th Nov. 1500, between Louis and Ferdinand. Although Alexander in his provident sagacity had freed himself by the death of Alphonso from every engagement with the house of Arragon, he nevertheless still raised some objections to its terms; but when it was pointed out that they had been drawn up solely to give the Christian princes an increased opportunity of attacking the Ottoman empire, such considerations, it may be well conceived, overcame whatever scruples he entertained; and he decided, therefore, on the 26th June, in full consistory, to declare Frederic no longer King of Naples. Frederic, indeed, on hearing of the arrival of the French army, the treachery of Ferdinand, and the act of dethronement published by Alexander, perceived that all was lost; but nevertheless, he was unwilling it should be said, that he renounced his kingdom, without at least an attempt for its defence. He directed, therefore, Fabricio Colonna and Ranucio de Marciano, to check, if possible, the French before Capua with three hundred men at arms, some light horse and infantry; he himself occupied Aversa, with another division, whilst Prosper Colonna, with the remainder, was to defend Naples and oppose the Spaniards in Calabria. These arrangements were scarcely made, when D'Aubigny, passing the Vulturno, laid siege to Capua, which he at once invested on both sides of the river. The French had hardly encamped, when their artillery was brought into play, to the great terror of the besieged, who were almost all merely fugitives from the neighbouring districts. Thus, although the assaults of the enemy had been bravely driven back by Fabricio Colonna, so great and headstrong was their terror, that every one talked of immediate surrender, and it was with the utmost difficulty that Colonna could induce the multitude to understand that it was at least desirable to profit by the check the besiegers had experienced, and thus to obtain favourable terms of surrender. But this was not the interest of Cesar Borgia; any capitulation whatever would deprive him of the booty and pleasure that the sack of a city so rich and densely populated as Capua must insure. He therefore, upon his own account, entered into stipulations with one of the chiefs stationed to defend a gate of the city; negotiations which, by the weight of gold, were far more efficacious than any others. While Fabricio Colonna was discussing on the bastions the terms of surrender with the French commanders, sudden cries of terror and for mercy arose from the besieged; for Borgia, without the slightest intimation of his design, had entered the city at the head of his troops, and was cutting down the garrison, who, relying on the signature of the treaty, had withdrawn from their posts. The French on their side, perceiving that half of the city had surrendered, rushed through the gates with such impetuosity that all further resistance was useless. The butchery and pillage had begun, and in vain did Fabricio Colonna, Marciano, and Don Ugo de Cardona attempt, by the few men they had hastily assembled, to make head at one against the French and Spaniards; Fabricio and Ugo were made prisoners; Ranucio fell wounded into the hands of the Duke of Valentinois; seven thousand of the besieged were massacred in the streets, including the traitor who had betrayed the gate; the churches were pillaged, the nunneries attacked, and the inmates of these were seen to throw themselves down the wells, or into the river, to escape the brutal passions of the soldiers. Three hundred of them, daughters of the noblest families of Capua, had taken refuge in a tower, the Duke of Valentinois burst open its gates, selected forty of the most beautiful for himself, and abandoned the rest to his army. The pillage lasted three days. Capua taken, Frederic felt that any further attempts to defend himself were useless, he in consequence shut himself up in the Chateau Neuf, and allowed Gaëta and Naples to enter into terms with the conqueror. Gaëta was spared by the payment of sixty thousand ducats, and Naples by the surrender of the citadel, which was yielded up by Frederic to D'Aubigny upon condition of his being allowed to retire to Ischia, with his treasures and jewellery, and to reside there unmolested during six months with his family. This capitulation was faithfully adhered to on both sides; D'Aubigny entered into Naples, and Frederic withdrew to Ischia.

Thus fell for ever that branch of the house of Arragon, after a reign of sixty-five years. Frederic, its head, demanded and obtained permission to enter France, where Louis XII. granted him the duchy of Anjou, and a pension of thirty thousand ducats, upon condition that he should never quit the kingdom, where he died 9th Sept. 1504. His eldest son, Don Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria, withdrew into Spain, where he died in 1550. Alphonso II., who had accompanied his father into France, died poisoned, it was said, at Grenoble, at the age of twenty-two; lastly Cesar, the third son, died at Ferrara in his eighteenth year. Charlotte, his daughter, was married in France to Nicolas Count de Saval, governor and admiral of Brittany; one daughter, the result of this marriage, was Anne de Saval, who was married to Francis de la Tremouille, and it is through her the house of La Tremouille inherited those rights which they subsequently made good upon the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The surrender of Naples freed the Duke of Valentinois from his engagements; he quitted, therefore, the French army, after having received from its commander renewed assurances of the friendship of Louis XII., and returned to the siege of Piombino.

In the mean time the pope visited the conquests of his son, and traversed the Romagna, accompanied by Lucretia, who was at last consoled for the loss of her husband, who had never been so high in his holiness's favour: and upon her return to Rome, she inhabited the same apartments as her father. The consequence of this renewal of papal friendship was two Bulls, which raised to a duchy the cities of Nepi and of Sermoneta: one was given to Giovanni Borgia, and the other to Don Roderic of Arragon, daughter of Lucretia and of Alphonso, and the territories of the Colonna were awarded as the appanage to these two duchies. Besides this, Alexander was already planning a further increase to his prosperity by a union between Lucretia and Don Alphonso d'Este, daughter of Hercules Duke of Ferrara, in favour of which Louis XII. had interested himself.

On the same day that he received intelligence of the fall of Piombino, he heard also that Duke Hercules had given his consent to the King of France. This news, in both respects, was of the greatest interest to Alexander, although one greatly exceeded the other in importance; the marriage of Lucretia with the heir presumptive of the duchy of Ferrara was, in fact, received with a joy that savoured a little of the upstart.

The Duke of Valentinois was invited to return to Rome, to assist at the public festivals, and the day of the announcement of the marriage the governor of the castle of St. Angelo received orders to fire the cannon every fifteen minutes, from noon till midnight.

At two o'clock Lucretia left the Vatican, accompanied by her brothers, the Duke of Valentinois and the Duke of Squillace, accompanied by all the nobility of Rome, and proceeded to the church Della Madonna del Popolo, wherein the Duke of Gandia and Giovanni Borgia were buried, to return thanks for this additional sign of the favour and protection of Heaven; and in the evening, accompanied by the same cavalcade, rendered still more brilliant by the light of torches, and the glare of the illuminations, she passed throughout the city amid cries of "Long live the Pope Alexander VI.," "Long live the Duchess of Ferrara," which were shouted by two heralds, dressed in cloth of gold.

On the following evening various public games, including a bull-fight and masquerades, were announced. A few days after this Lucretia proceeded to the Vatican, where the pope, the Duke of Valentinois, the Cardinal d'Este, and Don Ferdinand, proxy of the Duke Alphonso, awaited her arrival. The ceremony of the betrothals being completed, the Cardinal d'Este presented to Lucretia four costly jewelled rings, and then placed upon the table a casket, richly inlaid with ivory, from whence he took a quantity of jewels, chains, and collars of pearls and diamonds, the workmanship of which was not less valuable than the materials: and these he also requested her to accept until Don Alphonso could himself offer others more deserving her attention. Lucretia most joyfully received them, and then retired, leaning on the pope's arm, and accompanied by the ladies of her court, leaving the Duke of Valentinois to entertain the ambassadors at the Vatican. The ceremony of the espousals concluded, the pope and the Duke of Valentinois occupied themselves with the arrangements for her departure. Anxious this should be conducted with great pomp, the pope appointed, as a becoming escort for his daughter, besides her two brothers-in-law and the gentlemen of their retinue, the senate of Rome, and all those nobles whose fortune enabled them to display the greatest magnificence in their dresses and liveries. Among them were Oliviero and Ramiro Mattei, sons of Pietro Mattei and of a daughter that was born to the pope by another connexion than Vanozza; moreover, his holiness appointed Francesco Borgia, Cardinal de Cosenza, legate *à latere*, to accompany his daughter to the frontiers of the papal states. The Duke of Valentinois at the same time gave orders that Lucretia should be received throughout the cities of the Romagna as their sovereign, and thereupon great preparations were made to comply with his desire. The messengers, however, appointed for this purpose, reported that they greatly feared much dissatisfaction would be expresed at Cesena, where it will be remembered Cesar, to retain it in subjection, had left Ramiro d'Orco governor, with power of life and death over the citizens. Ramiro d'Orco had consequently so well discharged the duty intrusted to him, that there was nothing more to fear as regarded rebellion, for one-sixth of the inhabitants had perished upon the scaffold. A city in mourning for its dead could not be expected to offer the same demonstrations of joy as would be exhibited at Imola, Faenza, or Pesaro; but the duke remedied this inconvenience with a promptitude and success which was peculiarly his own. On awaking one morning the inhabitants of Cesena found a scaffold erected in the public square of the town, upon which was a man quartered, and this was surmounted by his head, affixed to the end of a pike. This was all that remained of Ramiro d'Orco. By whom this scaffold had been erected—by whom this terrible execution had taken place, was entirely unknown;—only the republic of Florence, requiring from Machiavelli, their envoy to Cesena, his opinion of the act, received for answer—

"Illustrious Lords,

"I can give you no information relative to the execution, except that Cesar Borgia is a prince who knows the best how to make and to unmake men according to their merits. "NICOLO MACHIAVELLI."

The duke's forethought was successful: the Duchess of Ferrara was warmly received in every city through which she passed, and particularly in the city of Cesena. Whilst thus Lucretia proceeded to Ferrara, to meet her fourth husband, Alexander and the Duke of Valentinois resolved to make a tour in their latest conquest, the Duchy of Piombino. The apparent motive of this was to receive the oath of submission from the duke's new subjects, but the real was to form an arsenal in the capital of Giacomo Appiano, bearing upon Tuscany, their designs on which, neither the pope nor his son had ever seriously renounced. They embarked, therefore, at Corneto in ten galleys, accompanied by a great number of cardinals and prelates, and arrived the same evening at Piombino. Here the papal court remained for some days, as well for the duke to receive the allegiance of the citizens, as to assist at some church ceremonies, the principal of which was held by the pope, upon the third Sunday in Lent; at which the Cardinal of Cosenza chanted the mass, assisted by the pope, and attended by the Duke of Valentinois. Then, that his habitual pleasures might relieve the performance of these serious duties, the pope desired the attendance of the most beautiful girls of the country, to go though their national dances in his presence. To these, festivals of the most sumptuous kind succeeded, at which, although it was Lent, the pope made no secret of his neglect of the abstinence enjoined. The objects of these festivals was also to spend a considerable sum of money in the country, and to make the duke popular by weakening as much as possible the memory of the unfortunate Giacomo d'Appiano. After Piombino they visited the Isle of Elba, where they remained only so long as was requisite to inspect the old, and give orders for the construction of some new, fortifications. They then re-embarked to return to Rome, but scarcely at sea, the weather became stormy, and the pope being unwilling to put back to Porto Ferrajo, they remained five days in the galleys which had on board provisions only for two. During the last three days the pope subsisted only upon some fried fish, obtained with great difficulty, owing to the weather. They arrived off Corneto, where the duke, who was in another galley, disembarked, whilst the pope was forced to continue his course towards Portercola, which he finally reached after encountering so violent a tempest, that all his attendants were completely exhausted, either by its effects, or the fear of death. The pope alone was calm and collected, remaining on the deck, seated in an easy chair, invoking the name of Jesus, and making the sign of the cross. He joined the Duke at Corneto, and thence by short stages they proceeded by Civita Vecchia and Palo, and so returned to Rome. Almost at the same time the Cardinal d'Albret arrived to receive the "promised hat" from the pope; he was accompanied by the two infants of Navarre, who were welcomed, not only with the honours due to their rank, but also as the brothers-in-law of the Duke of Valentinois, who was anxious to evince the importance he attached to their alliance.

It was now requisite for the duke to resume his conquests, and as on the 1st of May in the preceding year, the pope had in full consistory pronounced the sentence which deprived Giulio Cesare de Varano of his estates, and the annexation to the holy see, as a punishment for the murder of his brother Rodolpho, and the protection he had granted to the pope's enemies, Cesar quitted Rome to execute that decree. Upon his arrival on the frontiers of Perouse belonging to his general, Giovanni Paolo Baglioni, he despatched Oliveretto da Fermo and Gravina Orsini to lay waste the march of Camerino, requesting at the same time the aid of Guido d'Ubaldo di Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, in the enterprise, which the duke, in the strictest amity with the pope, and having no reason to suspect the intentions of Cesar, did not dare refuse. But the same day that his troops marched towards Camerino, those of the Duke of Valentinois entered the duchy of Urbino, and made themselves masters of Cagli, one of the four cities of this minor state. The duke foresaw the consequences of resistance; he fled, therefore, disguised as a peasant, so that within less than eight days Cesar was in possession of his duchy, excepting the fortresses of Majolo, and of San-Leo. The duke now returned to Camerino, which still held out, animated by the presence of Giulio Cesare de Varano, and of his two sons Venantio and Annibale: the eldest, Giovanni Maria, he had sent to Venice. Cesar's arrival led to conferences. A capitulation was drawn up, by which security of life, and the possession of their property, was conceded to the besieged. But this was not in accordance with the objects of Cesar; therefore, profiting by the relaxation of vigilance, which naturally ensues upon the announcement of a capitulation, he surprised the city the night prior to its surrender, and made Varano and his two sons prisoners, who were all strangled, the father at Pergola, and the two sons at Pesaro, by Don Michel Correglia, who, although promoted to a captaincy, returned at intervals to his earlier avocations as a sbirro.

In the meantime, Vitellozzo Vitelli, with the title of vicar-general of the church, having under his command eight hundred men-at-arms, and three thousand infantry, had, in compliance with the secret and verbal instructions he had received from Cesar, strictly carried out the system of invasion, which was to encompass Florence in a net of iron, and render her defence impossible. A scholar worthy of the master, taught to employ either the slyness of the fox or the strength of the lion, he had intrigued with some youthful nobles of Arezzo to deliver up to him the city. Meanwhile the conspiracy being discovered by Guglielmo dei Pazzi, the Florentine commissioner, he caused the arrest of two of its members, but the others, far more numerous than had been supposed, assembling in all parts of the city, and urging an appeal to arms, the republicans, who in any revolution saw the means of throwing off the Florentine yoke, joined them, set free the captives, seized Guglielmo, and having proclaimed the re-establishment of the ancient constitution, laid siege to the citadel, where Cosmo dei Pazzi, Bishop of Arezzo, had taken refuge, who, finding himself surrounded on all sides, immediately despatched a courier to Florence to demand aid. Unfortunately for the cardinal, the troops of Vitelli were nearer to the besiegers, than those of .Florence to the besieged; so that instead of auxiliaries, the army of the enemy approached. This was commanded by Vitelli, Baglioni, and Orsini; and along with them were the two Medici, who hastened to every quarter where there was a league against Florence, and who placed themselves entirely in the hands of Borgia, ready to enter the city from which they had been expelled, under any stipulation whatever. Another reinforcement, both in artillery and money, from Pandolfo Petrucci arrived the following morning, so that the citadel, unsupported by Florence, was obliged on the 18th of June to surrender.

Vitellozzo entrusted the charge of the city to the Aretini, garrisoned the citadel with a thousand men under Fabio Orsino, and profiting by the terror which the successive conquests of the duchy of Urbino, Camerino, and Arezzo had created, he marched upon Monte-San-Severino, upon Castiglione-Aretino, Cortona, and the other cities of the Val de Chiana, all of which surrendered almost without defence. Thus within ten or twelve leagues from Florence, yet not daring to attack it, he sent to receive instructions from Cesar, who thinking the time had now arrived to strike the blow so long suspended, departed immediately to be the messenger of his own reply to his lieutenants. But if the Florentines had sent no succours to Guglielmo dei Pazzi, they had at least required them from Chaumont d'Amboise, governor of the Milanese for Louis XII., pointing out not only the danger incurred, but also the ambitious projects of Cesar, who first invading the minor, then the secondary states, would probably be so excited by the pride of conquest, as to attack the territories of the king.

At this time the state of Naples was unsatisfactory; serious differences already had arisen between the Count d'Armagnac and Gonzalvo of Cordova. Louis XII. might probably soon require the assistance of Florence, always hitherto faithful. He resolved, therefore, to stop Cesar's further advance; and not only did he send him an order to stop the march of his troops, but, to ensure its fulfilment, he marched instantly four hundred lances, under Imbaut, into Tuscany.. Upon the frontiers, therefore, Cesar received a copy of a treaty concluded between the republic and the King of France, in which the former was bound to aid her ally against all enemies whatever, and along with it the formal order from the king forbidding his further advance. Cesar heard at the same time, that, in addition to the force under Imbaut, Louis, on arriving at Asti, had immediately directed two hundred men-at-arms, three thousand Swiss, and a powerful train of artillery, to advance towards Parma, under Louis de la Tremouille. He saw in these combined movements hostile designs towards himself, and instantly changed, with his customary ability, his policy to his purpose. Profiting by his merely verbal instructions, he wrote to Vitellozzo, reproaching him with having compromised his interests for the furtherance of his own, desiring him immediately to restore to the Florentines the cities and fortresses he had captured, threatening to march against him if these were longer retained. This done, he set out for Milan, where Louis had just arrived, offering by the very fact of the evacuation of the captured cities a convincing proof that he had been misrepresented to the king. He was also empowered by the pope to renew for eighteen months the title of legate à *latere*, conferred upon Cardinal d'Amboise, the friend rather than the minister of Louis. Owing to this public proof of his innocence and his influence, Cesar was soon reconciled to the king; nor was this all: ever bent upon rising the greater from the event designed to crush him, he calculated at once the possible advantages to be derived from this pretended disobedience of his lieutenants. Their power was already a source of uneasiness to him, and he thought the time was perhaps at hand when, by their destruction and the possession of their estates, he might obtain some indemnification for the loss of Florence, which invariably escaped from his grasp when most it seemed within his power. The lieutenants of the Duke of Valentinois, like those of Alexander, were already too powerful, and Borgia must inherit their domains if he wished to prevent their inheritance of his. He obtained three hundred lances from Louis to march against them. Vitellozzo, however, had no sooner read the letter of Cesar than he foresaw that he was sacrificed to the fear of offending the King of France; but he was not one thus easily to be offered up in expiation of a fault: moreover, the examples of Marano and Manfredi were before him; and death for death, it was better to fall with arms in his hands. He convoked, therefore, at Maggione, all those whose lives and domains were menaced by this new change in the policy of Cesar. These were, Paolo Orsini, Giovanni Paolo Baglioni, Hermes Bentivoglio, Antonio de Venafro, Oliverotto da Fermo, and the Duke d'Urbino: the six first had every thing to lose—the last had lost all. They signed a league for mutual defence, whether they were attacked conjointly or separately. The first intimation of this treaty was brought to Cesar by its results. The Duke d'Urbino, beloved by his subjects, had no sooner arrived with a few soldiers before the fortress of St. Leo than it surrendered, and in less than eight days the entire duchy was restored under the government of the duke. Cesar was at Imola, where he awaited the arrival of the French troops, but almost without soldiers; so that, had Bentivoglio and the Duke of Urbino united their forces and marched against him, it is probable either that he would have been made prisoner, or constrained to quit the Romagna: the more so as Don Ugo de Cardona and Michelotto, having misunderstood his instructions, found their communications with him suddenly cut off. He had, in fact, desired them to fall back upon Rimini and to bring him two hundred light horse and five hundred infantry which they commanded; but, unacquainted with the danger of his position, whilst they attempted to carry Pergola and Fossombrone by surprise, they were surrounded by Orsini, Gravina, and Vitellozzo. Ugo de Cardona and Michelotto made a stout defence, notwithstanding which their troops were cut to pieces. The former was made prisoner; the latter only escaped by concealing himself among the dead; then at nightfall he took refuge at Fano. The confederates, however, notwithstanding the weakness of his force, did not venture to attack Cesar, whether from fear, or that they might respect him as the ally of the King of France; they therefore contented themselves by the reduction of the surrounding cities and fortresses, many of which fell into the hands of Vitellozzo, Orsino, and Gravina; whilst Giovanni Maria de Varano, who had escaped the massacre of his family, re-entered Camerino amid the acclamations of his people.

Yet these successes by no means diminish the confidence of Cesar in his good fortune; and whilst on the one hand he hastened the arrival of the French troops, and enlisted in his pay the numerous roving bands then known as the "*lances brisées*," he opened negociations with his enemies, certain that the day which should bring them to a conference, would witness their destruction. Cesar had, in fact, been endowed by Heaven with the fatal gift of persuasion, so that, well aware as men might be of his duplicity, there was no means to resist it, not so much because of his eloquence, as owing to that air of frank *bonhommie* which he so well knew how to assume, and which Machiavelli so highly praised, who, subtle politician as he was, had been frequently deceived by its address. To induce Paolo Orsino to treat with him at Imola, he sent the Cardinal Borgia to the confederates as an hostage. Paolo thereupon hesitated no longer, and reached Imola the 20th of October, 1502. The duke welcomed him as an old friend, from whom one has been separated, by some trifling and momentary disagreement for a few days. He frankly avowed that the wrong was on his side, since he had alienated from him, men who were at once loyal nobles and brave captains; but, he added, among men of their character, an open and sincere explanation such as he now offered ought to restore every thing to its former friendly footing. Then, as a proof it was not fear but good will that had induced him to seek a reconciliation, he showed to Orsino the letters of Cardinal d'Amboise, announcing the immediate arrival of the French troops: he drew out before him his new recruits, desiring, added he, they should be well convinced that what he principally regretted, was not so much the loss of captains so distinguished, that they were the soul of his vast designs, but that he had for one instant induced the world to believe he had not recognised their merit; that in consequence he relied upon him, whom he had ever preferred to all, to induce his colleagues to conclude with him a peace which should be as profitable as war was prejudicial to their interests; and that for himself he was ready to enter into any arrangements not derogatory to his honour.

Orsino was a man in every respect suited for Cesar's purposes, proud and self-conceited; a sincere believer of the proverb, that a pope could not reign for eight days against the will of the Colonna and the Orsini. He trusted, therefore, if not to Cesar's good faith, at least to his necessities, and signed on October 18, 1802, the following convention.

"That his excellency the Duke of Romagna on the one hand, and on the other the Orsini, with their confederates, being desirous of putting an end to the enmities which have arisen between them, agree to the following terms. That there shall be a perpetual peace and alliance between the contracting parties, and that in conformity with that design, his excellency the Duke of Romagna shall receive as confederates all the aforesaid nobles, each promising to defend the estates of all in general, and of each in particular, against whoever may attack them, excepting always his holiness the Pope Alexander VI., and his most Christian Majesty Louis XII., king of France. The undermentioned nobles agree also in the same terms to defend the person and estates of his excellency as well as those of the illustrious nobles, Don Godfredo Borgia, Don Roderic Borgia, and Don Giovanni Borgia, all brothers or nephews of the Duke of Romagna. Moreover, as the rebellion and conquest of the duchies of Urbino and Camerino have occurred during the late differences, the aforesaid nobles agree to assist in their recovery, and his excellency the Duke of Romagna is bound to continue to the Orsini and Vitelli their former military engagements, and upon the same conditions. He promises, moreover, to demand the personal service but of one of the confederates; that of the others being voluntary. He engages also the ratification of the second treaty, which releases Cardinal Orsino from his residence at Rome, except as it may be in conformity with his own desires. And as differences have arisen between the Pope and Giovanni Bentivoglio, these shall be submitted to the arbitrement without appeal of Cardinal Orsino, the Duke of Romagna, and of Pandolfo Petrucci. The aforesaid nobles agree also upon the requisition of the Duke of Romagna, to place in his hands as hostages, one of the legitimate children of each, at the time and place it may please him to indicate. Moreover, if any of the contracting parties are made aware of designs prejudicial to the interests of another, they are bound to apprise him and the other confederates of the fact. Finally, to consider, as their common enemy, whoever fails in the fulfilment of the present stipulations, and to combine for the destruction of such estates as may oppose them.

(Signed) "Cæsar; Paul Orsino.
"Agapit, Secretary."

When Cæsar presented to the confederates the signature of the treaty, Bentivoglio, not wishing to submit to the arbitration, made proposals to [illegible] the settlement of their differences by a separate agreement, [illegible] to draw up its terms, which, after some [illegible] Bentivoglio was to withdraw from [illegible] men-at-arms, and [illegible] to pay twelve thousand [illegible] hundred lances. On [illegible] the Duke of Valen- [illegible] his sovereignty over [illegible] Ferrara and the republic, [illegible]

[illegible]

north of Italy. Florence feared that its retreat from her territories concealed a snare, and Venice, observing its approach, immediately despatched an army to the Po. Cesar perceiving this, and fearing it might prejudice his interests by creating distrust, dismissed at Cesena his French auxiliaries, excepting one hundred men-at-arms, commanded by M. de Candale, his brother-in-law, reducing his force to two thousand cavalry and ten thousand infantry. Some days were spent in conferences at Cesena, for the duke here met the envoys of the confederates who were with their troops in the duchy of Urbino; but from the very first deliberation upon the course to be pursued with respect to the completion of its conquest, so many difficulties were started that it was felt that an interview between Cesar and one of the other parties to the treaty was requisite. Thereupon Oliverotto da Formo proposed to him either to march upon Tuscany, or to seize upon Sinigaglia, the last place in the duchy of Urbino, not yet restored to his power. Cesar replied, he was unwilling to carry war into Tuscany, the Tuscans being his allies; but he approved of the latter project, and consequently marched towards Fano. But the daughter of Frederic, the former duke of Urbino, who held the citadel of Sinigaglia, aware that defence was impossible, committed it to the charge of an officer, desiring him to obtain for the city the most favourable terms he could. The duke heard of this at Rimini by a courier from Vitelli and the Orsini, who informed him the governor of the citadel had declined its surrender to them, but was willing to enter into terms with him, and they in consequence advised him to proceed to the city. Cesar replied, that in accordance with their recommendation he should dismiss at Cesena and Imola a part of his troops, for as he should join theirs (his only object being to give peace to the duchy), these, together with his own escort, would be sufficient: but that this pacification was impossible if his former friends continued so distrustful as to submit the settlement of their mutual interests to agents. The confederates admitted the correctness of his opinion, but did not the less hesitate to agree to his request. Vitellozzo in particular evinced a distrust that nothing seemed able to overcome, though he at last consented to meet the duke, but much rather from a wish not to appear more timid than his companions, than from any confidence he felt in the sincerity of the friendship of Borgia.

Their decision was conveyed to the duke upon his arrival at Fano, the 20th December, 1502. He immediately summoned eight of his most faithful adherents, amongst whom were M. d'Enna, his nephew, Michelotto, and Ugo de Cordona, and ordered them, upon their arrival at Sinigaglia, when they observed Oliverotto, Gravina, Vitellozzo, and Orsino advance to meet him, to place themselves, as a mark of respect, side by side with them, two to one, so that upon a given signal, they could either arrest or stab them. Then describing to each the chief he should accompany, he recommended them not to quit him until they should arrive at the quarters prepared for them at Sinigaglia; after which he directed his soldiers to assemble eight thousand strong upon the banks of the Metauro, a little river of Umbria, which flows into the Adriatic, and near which Asdrubal was defeated. The duke arrived at the appointed rendezvous, upon the 31st December, and sent forward immediately two hundred horsemen and the infantry, which he followed with his men-at-arms, coasting the Adriatic, having on his right the mountains, and upon his left the sea, though at times the road was so narrow that the army could not advance with more than ten abreast in front. After a four hours' march, the duke, at a turn of the road, perceived Sinigaglia, situated about a mile from the sea; a bow-shot from the mountains, a little river flowed between the city and the army, the banks of which it was requisite to follow for some time in their descent; at last he found a bridge thrown across it, opposite to one of the quarters of the city. Here the duke ordered the cavalry to halt, and being drawn up in two files, the infantry defiled between, entered the city, and were stationed in the principal square.

To admit the entry of the duke's army, Vitellozzo, Gravina, Orsino, and Oliverotto had cantoned their soldiers in the environs, the latter alone had retained about a thousand foot and a hundred and fifty horsemen in a barrack near to the suburb through which the duke passed. Scarcely had Cesar approached the city, when he observed Vitellozzo, the Duke of Gravina, and Orsino advancing to meet him; the two last sufficiently gay and unsuspecting, but the first so sad and depressed, that it seemed as though he had foreseen his fate; indeed this seemed to be the case; for, upon quitting his army, he had bid his soldiers farewell, as if never destined to rejoin them, and had committed his family to the protection of his officers, shedding tears as he embraced his children, a weakness which appeared strange on the part of so brave a soldier. Valentinois advanced and extended his hand in a manner so frank and loyal, that Gravina and Orsino no longer doubted his sincerity; Vitelli alone remained as dejected as before. In the mean time the trusty agents of the duke had obeyed his instructions, taking their places on the right and left of their victims, excepting Oliverotto, whom the duke, not perceiving, sought for with much anxiety, until he observed him exercising his troops in their quarters. He immediately sent Michelotto and M. d'Enna with instructions to induce him to withdraw his troops into their quarters, lest quarrels should arise between the duke's soldiers and his own, and then to join his companions, who were now with Cesar. Oliverotto, betrayed by his destiny, made no objection, and escorted by them, immediately galloped towards his friends. As soon as he drew near, the duke held out his hand, and advanced towards the palace prepared for him, leaving his victims in the rear. Cesar alighted and made a sign to the leader of his men at arms to await his further orders; he then entered, followed by Oliverotto, Gravina, Vitelli, and Orsino, each attended by their acolites, but scarcely had they reached the apartments than the door was closed upon them, and Cesar, turning round, exclaimed, "The hour is come!" whereupon each of the confederates was seized, and with the dagger at his throat, obliged to surrender up his arms. Immediately after Cesar opened the window, gave the preconcerted signal to the commander of his men at arms, who proceeded directly to the barracks, wherein the troops of Oliverotto were quartered, and these, being thus surprised, were made prisoners to a man. The troops then pillaged the city, and Machiavelli was summoned to the presence of the duke. Their interview lasted two hours, during which Cesar expressed his pleasure at the success of his stratagem, which would destroy at a blow the enemies of the king, of the Florentine republic, and of himself; put an end to all cause of dissension and future strife in Italy; concluding with two requests—that the republic should advance its cavalry towards Bergo, for the purpose, if need were, marching with him upon Cartello and Perugia; and, secondly, that it 'd authorize the arrest of the Duke of Urbino, should he take refuge in the Florentine territory, on hearing of the detention of Vitellozzo.

Upon Machiavelli's objecting that, with respect to the latter, it would compromise the dignity of the republic, and therefore never could be agreed to, Cesar approved of his decision, and added it would be sufficient if he were detained, and not set at liberty without his consent.

The same night eight men in masks descended into the dungeons in which the prisoners were confined, who anticipated the fatal hour had struck for them all. But the executioner's duty for the present was limited to Vitelli and Oliverotto. When their sentence was announced to them, Oliverotto burst forth into violent reproaches against Vitelli, declaring he had induced him to rise in arms against the duke; as for Vitelli, he merely prayed the pope would grant him a plenary indulgence for his sins. They were then led out beyond the ramparts of the city, strangled, and their bodies thrown into two graves already prepared for their reception. The fate of the others was only retarded, until news arrived of the arrest of Cardinal Orsino by the pope, upon which Gravina and Orsino were similarly strangled. The duke quitted Sinigaglia upon the execution of Vitelli, leaving some instructions to Michelotto, and assuring Machiavelli that his only desire had been to restore peace to the Romagna and Tuscany, and that he thought he had gained his object in thus putting to death those who had been the cause of all the troubles by which their territories had suffered; that, as for any future revolts, they would be as sparks that a drop of water might extinguish. No sooner was the pope aware of the success of his son's stratagem than, anxious to play his own part, he sent (although it was midnight) to acquaint the Cardinal Orsino, that Sinigaglia was taken, and invited him to come in the morning and converse with him upon the good news. In consequence, at an early hour, he went on horseback to the Vatican, but at the corner of the first street he met the governor of Rome with a detachment of cavalry, who congratulated him upon the accident, which had made them thus companions, and accompanied him to the door of the palace; here the cardinal alighted, and ascended the staircase, which he had hardly done, before his mules and retinue were seized. He also, upon entering the hall, found himself suddenly surrounded by the guards, who led him to another hall, where he found the Abbé Alviano, the protonotary Orsino, Giacomo Santa-Croce, and Rinaldo Orsino prisoners also; and at the same time the governor received orders to take possession of the château of Monte-Giardino, belonging to the Orsini, and to bring away all the jewels, silver plate, and whatever valuable property it contained. This order was most conscientiously obeyed; every thing, even to the cardinal's account-books, being brought to the Vatican. Two items particularly struck the pope upon its inspection; the first was an entry of two thousand ducats due to the cardinal, but without the name of the debtor; the second, that three months before the cardinal had purchased, for fifteen thousand Roman crowns, a costly pearl not forthcoming among those his holiness now had in his possession, whereupon he gave orders that until the cardinal's accounts were properly balanced, the men who twice a day brought food to the prisoner should not be allowed to enter the castle of St. Angelo. Upon the same day the cardinal's mother brought the two thousand ducats, and his mistress, in man's clothes, the missing pearl; but the pope was so struck by her beauty under that disguise, that he restored it to her at the price she had originally given. The pope moreover allowed food to be conveyed to the cardinal, prepared also in such a manner that he died, poisoned, upon the 22d of February, that is to say, two days after his accounts had been examined and corrected. Upon the evening of his decease, the Prince de Squillace took possession, in the name of the pope, of his territories.

In the mean time the Duke of Valentinois marched upon Citta-di-Castello and Perugia, which he took without a blow. Sienna alone remained, in which Pandolfo Petrucci, the last of the confederates, had taken refuge; but Sienna was under the protection of the French, and beyond the dominions of the church. Cesar was content to exact, therefore, the retirement of Petrucci to Lucca, which was done; whereupon, the Romagna being entirely subjected, he resolved to return, and assist the pope in the destruction of what yet remained of the Orsini. Prior to this, the attention of Louis of France being engaged by some reverses he had experienced at Naples, Cesar seized successively upon Vicovaro, Palembera, Sanzano, and Cervetti, and having thus extended the papal states from the frontiers of Naples to those of Venice, he marched to Rome, intending to consult his father upon the means of raising his dukedom into a kingdom. He came in time to divide with Alexander the inheritance of the Cardinal Giovanni Michele, who had just died, poisoned by a cup he had received from the pope. He found his father preoccupied also by an important speculation; he had decided upon creating nine cardinals upon the approaching solemnity of St. Peter, from which the following advantages would accrue:—first, the benefices of the new cardinals would revert to the pope, who would sell them; next, the nine selected would purchase the dignity more or less dear, according to their means—the price, left to the pope's discretion, would vary from ten thousand to forty thousand ducats. Lastly, as cardinals, having lost the right of bequest, the pope became their successor; thus he had only to poison them, and he became their heir, placing himself thus in the situation of the butcher, who, in want of money, has only to slaughter the fattest sheep of his flock. The nomination took place—the nine cardinals were elected—the price of their simony paid, and their vacant benefices sold. The pope now selected those it was requisite to poison: the number was fixed at three—Cardinals Cassa Nova, Melchiore Copis, and Adriano Castellense, who had taken the title of Adrien de Corneto, and who, by his numerous offices, had amassed an immense fortune. When these points were settled between Cesar and the pope, they invited their select party of guests to sup with them at a villa near the Vatican, belonging to the Cardinal de Corneto; and early in the morning they sent thither their *maître d'hôtel*, to make the requisite arrangements, and Cesar, at the same time, gave to the pope's butler two bottles of wine prepared with a white powder, resembling sugar, whose fatal properties he had so often tested; desiring him at the same time not to serve it but upon his orders, nor to any but those whom he should specially mention. On this account the butler had placed the wine upon the sideboard, apart from the rest, and particularly desired the servants not to touch it, being specially reserved for the pope's use.

Towards evening Alexander quitted the Vatican on foot, leaning upon Cesar's arm, and accompanied by the cardinal Caraffa; but as the heat was great, and the ascent was somewhat steep, upon reaching its height, he stopped for a few minutes to recover himself, which he had hardly done, when putting his hand to his breast, he found he had forgotten a gold chain and a medallion, which latter contained a consecrated wafer. It was his custom to wear this suspended to his neck, owing to an astrologer's prediction, that so long as he wore the consecrated host, neither steel nor poison could affect him. Deprived, therefore, of his talisman, he desired Caraffa to return immediately to the Vatican, and bring it him without delay. Then, as the walk had made him thirsty, still making signs of haste to the cardinal, he turned towards a servant, and desired him to bring some wine, and Cesar gave a similar order. Now, by strange fatality, it happened that the butler had returned to the Vatican for some fine peaches that had been sent as a present to the pope, and which he had forgotten; the servant upon this spoke to the under butler, saying that his holiness and the duke being thirsty, had desired some wine. Whereupon, observing two bottles placed apart from the rest, and having heard they were reserved for the pope, he gave one to the servant, with two glasses upon a salver, and this wine the pope and his son took, without the slightest supposition it was of the vintage reserved for their guests.

In the mean time Caraffa had reached the palace, and, familiar with its interior, entered the apartments of the pope, a candle in his hand, but unaccompanied by any domestic; on entering a corridor, the wind extinguished his light; but, directed as he had been, where to find the medallion, he advanced, but upon opening the door of the room, he fell back with a cry of terror; for before him, between the door and the table upon which the chain was, he saw Alexander VI. stretched motionless and livid on a bier, at the four corners of which were lighted flambeaux. He stood for a moment petrified by fear, unable to advance or to retire, but thinking it probably the effect of his imagination, or caused by the agency of the evil one, he made the sign of the cross, whereupon all disappeared, and then, although a cold sweat burst from every pore, he advanced to the table, and returned with the medallion. He found the guests assembled, and the pope, who was extremely pale, the moment he appeared, came forward to meet him, but upon stretching out his hand to receive the medallion, he fell back and uttered a loud cry, which was instantly followed by the most violent convulsions, whilst a few minutes afterwards, as he advanced to his assistance, Cesar was seized with the same symptoms. They were carried side by side to the Vatican, each to their separate apartments, and from that hour they never met again. The pope was now attacked by a violent fever, which defied all the resources of medical skill, and rendered requisite the administration of the last sacraments of the church: yet owing to the excellence of his constitution, he struggled for eight days against death; eight days of agony, at the expiration of which he died, without once mentioning either Cesar or Lucretia, the two pivots upon which had revolved both his affections and his crimes. He died at sixty-two, after a reign of eleven years.

As for Çesar, whether he had taken less of the fatal liquid than his father, or whether the strength of his youth overcame the strength of the poison, or whether, according to some, he had, upon reaching the Vatican, immediately swallowed an antidote known only to himself, he was less violently affected. He did not, however, for a moment lose sight of his dangerous situation, but summoned his faithful Michelotto, with those of his men upon whom he could chiefly rely, and distributed them throughout the anterooms, and ordered their chief not to quit the foot of his bed, but to sleep upon his coverlid with his hand upon the hilt of his sword. The remedies adopted for Cesar were the same as those for the pope, except that they added extraordinary baths, which Cesar had himself directed to be prepared, having heard that in a similar case they had cured King Ladislaus of Naples. Four posts were erected in his room, firmly fixed in the floor and ceiling, similar to the machine used for shoeing horses; every day a bull was brought in, thrown upon its back, and tied by its limbs to the posts, an incision was then made in its stomach about one foot and a half in length, through which the intestines were extracted, and Cesar then entering, while the body yet palpitated with life, enjoyed a bath of blood. He was then wrapped in warm cloths, by which, after profuse perspiration, he felt in general relieved. Every two hours, notwithstanding his own state, he sent to inquire about the pope, and immediately he heard that he was dead, resuming that energy and presence of mind which were habitual to him, he desired Michelotto to close the doors of the Vatican, and to allow no one admission to his apartments until he was master of his gold, and the papers he had left. Michelotto obeyed, and sought instantly the Cardinal Casanova, placed a dagger at his throat, and made him surrender the keys of the rooms and the cabinets of the pope, and guided by him, they took away two chests of gold, to the value of one hundred thousand Roman crowns, and a great quantity of jewels, silver plate, and precious vases, all of which were carried into Cesar's apartments; his guards were then doubled, and the gates of the Vatican being reopened, the death of the pope was announced. This, although expected, nevertheless was a matter of extreme dread to the city, for Cesar's state of health kept every one in a fearful suspense. Had he indeed been sitting sword in hand upon his war-horse, events would never have appeared uncertain or indecisive; but he was confined to his bed, and although the thought to plan remained, the power to execute was gone, and he was obliged to submit and follow the course of events, instead of governing circumstances by his will. The enemies he had most to fear were the Orsini and Colonnas; the one he had robbed of life, and the other of possessions; he addressed himself, therefore, to those to whom he could restore what he had taken, and opened negociations with the Colonnas. In the mean time arrangements were made for the papal obsequies; the vice-chancellor had summoned the different superiors and minor orders of the clergy, on pain of being deprived of their dignities, to repair in their respective costumes to the Vatican, from whence the body was to be conveyed to St. Peter's for interment. They found upon their arrival the body abandoned by every retainer, for every Borgia, Cesar excepted, had concealed himself, and wisely; for shortly after, Fabio Orsino meeting one by chance, instantly stabbed him, and in sign of the mortal hatred he had sworn, washed his hands and mouth with his victim's blood.

So great was the excitement which prevailed at Rome, that at the moment when Alexander's body was borne into the church, there arose one of those uncertain and vague rumours which in times of commotion produce so violent an effect upon the public feeling. The guards drew up in order of battle, the clergy sought shelter in the sacristy, and the pope's body, from the fear of its bearers, fell upon the steps, whilst the people, tearing aside the coverings, all could gaze with impunity upon him who but fifteen days since had, from one extremity of the world to the other, been the cause of fear to princes, kings, and emperors. Nevertheless, by that religion of the grave, that each instinctively feels, and which survives all other feelings, even in the heart of the atheist, the body was taken up and placed before the high altar, and there exposed to the public view, but the pope's body had become so black, so deformed and swollen, that it was fearful to gaze on, and owing to its rapid decomposition, no one now drew nigh to offer the last customary marks of religion and respect. Towards seven in the evening, that is, when the decline of day adds its subduing spirit to the silence of the church, some workmen carried the body to the chapel where it was to be interred, and removing from it the funeral decorations, placed it in a common niche destined for its reception. On the morrow the following was found written upon his tomb:

Vendit Alexander claves, altaria, Christum;
Emerat ille prius, vendere jure potest.

The keys, the altar, and his God he sold;
He had a right to sell, who bought with gold.

CHAPTER VIII.

By the effect the death of Alexander produced at Rome, we may estimate its influence, not on Italy only, but the world. For a moment Europe was shaken as the column which sustained the vault of the political edifice crumbled into pieces, and the star around which all had revolved was extinguished; and for an interval darkness and silence prevailed. But as the feeling died away, all who had an injury to revenge appeared, and rushed to the quarry. The Orsini and other nobles obtained possession of their estates; but the Romagna remained faithful, for the people had never been so happy as under the government of Cesar. As for the Colonnas, they agreed to remain neutral, having regained their estates in better state than prior to their expulsion, the pope having fortified and adorned them. Cesar still remained writhing, like a wounded lion, upon his bed of torture, protected by his troops, whilst the cardinals, whose fears were subsiding, had begun to assemble, either at the Minerva or at the palace of Cardinal Caraffa. But still alarmed at the forces which remained under the command of Michelotto, they raised at their own expense an army of two thousand soldiers under Charles Taneo, with the title of Captain of the Sacred College, hoping thus that peace would be preserved, when they heard that the forces of Prosper Colonna, and of Fabio Orsino had entered Rome at the interval of one day only between the arrival of each, such was their mutual eagerness and rivalry. Thus five armies were encamped at Rome in presence of each other: Cesar's who held the Vatican and the Borgo, the Bishop of Nicastro's at the castle of St. Angelo, that of the Sacred College, and those of Prosper Colonna and of Fabio Orsino, the one quartered at the Capitol, the other at Ripetta. Thus situated, at the instance of the cardinals, the ambassadors of Germany, France, Spain, and of Venice, assembled, and for the purpose of ensuring the public safety, ordered the Orsini, the Colonnas, and the Duke of Valentinois, to quit Rome. The Colonnas and the Orsini obeyed; Cesar alone remained. He was willing, he said, to go, but upon conditions, which if they were refused, he declared that the cellars of the Vatican being mined, he would blow himself up with those who advanced to seize him. It was, therefore, agreed that he should withdraw unmolested with his army, artillery, and military stores, and that he should be supported by a troop of four hundred infantry, in the pay of the Sacred College, to enforce obedience to these terms. On his part Cesar engaged to retire ten miles from Rome during the sitting of the conclave, which was similarly promised by Fabio Orsino and Prosper Colonna. The duke quitted Rome by the gate of the Vatican; he reclined upon a bed covered with a scarlet canopy, borne by twelve of his halberdiers. His lips were livid, and his eyes bloodshot; beside him was his drawn sword, and near his litter his war-horse caparisoned in black velvet with his arms emblazoned; he was surrounded by his troops with pikes and halberds elevated, but without their customary music, thus imparting an impressive funeral character to the procession, which at the gates of the city was joined by Prosper Colonna, who awaited it with a considerable force. Cesar's first thought was, that faithless to his word, as he so frequently had been to his, Colonna was about to attack him, which he perceiving immediately advanced towards his litter unaccompanied, and offered to escort him, as he feared some ambuscade on the part of Fabio Orsino, who had sworn to revenge his father's death. Cesar thanked him, but added that, Orsino being unsupported, he had nothing to fear. Whereupon Colonna rejoined his troop marching towards Albano, whilst Cesar took the road to Citta Castellana. Here he was not only master of his own lot, but the disposer of that of others. Twelve of the twenty-two votes which he had in the Sacred College had remained faithful, and as the conclave is in all composed of thirty-seven cardinals, he was enabled by these to incline the majority as he chose. He was consequently courted by the Spanish party and the French, each desiring to elect a pope from the cardinals of their nation. He listened without promising, but finally bestowed them upon Francesco Piccolomini, Cardinal of Sienna, who had remained his friend, and who was elected October 8, as Pius III. He was not deceived: Pius III. immediately after his election sent him a safe conduct to return to Rome, where the duke reappeared at the head of two hundred and fifty men-at-arms, two hundred and fifty light horse, and eight hundred infantry. The Orsini still pursuing their projects of revenge, levied troops at Perugia and in its environs, to attack Cesar even in the streets of Rome, whilst he in the mean time had signed a new treaty with Louis XII., by which he engaged to maintain him in his conquest of Naples, both with troops and in person, as soon as he could remount his horse, Louis guaranteeing the domains he now retained, and his aid to recover those of which he had been dispossessed. The day when this treaty was published, Gonzalvo de Cordova proclaimed, by sound of trumpet, the order for every subject of the King of Spain to throw up his engagements in every foreign army, under pain of high treason. The duke was deprived by this measure oc twelve of his best officers, and nearly three hundred soldiers. The Orsini upon this entered Rome supported by the Spanish ambassador, and cited Cesar before the pope and the Sacred College, to answer for his crimes, but faithful to his engagements, the pope replied, that as a sovereign prince, and for his temporal government, Cesar was answerable to God alone. Nevertheless, aware that, despite his good will, he could not long protect him, he advised his endeavouring to effect a junction with the French, still advancing towards Naples, and under whose protection he could alone remain in safety. Cesar resolved to retire to Bracciano, where Giovanni Orsino, who alone of his family had not declared against him, offered him an asylum in the name of Cardinal Amboise; he gave orders, therefore, one morning to his troops, to march towards that city, and placing himself amid them, quitted Rome. But although he had concealed his resolution, the Orsini were aware of his design, and pushed forward troops in such a manner, that upon his arrival at Storta, the duke found the army drawn up in battle array, in force very superior to his own. To engage these Cesar felt was to rush into destruction; he therefore ordered a retreat, which he conducted with such ability as to re-enter Rome without the loss of a soldier.

He retired to the Vatican, to place himself more completely under the pope's protection, and arrange his soldiers so as to command all the outlets. The Orsini, bent on his destruction, attacked him on all sides, without regard to the sacredness of the spot, but in vain, so excellent were the discipline and tactics of his troops. Unable to force the castle of St. Angelo, they hoped to have greater success by returning to the attack at the gate Torione, but this movement had been foreseen, and they found it barricaded and guarded. They did not, however, abandon their design; and having surprised the outposts, they set the gate on fire, and advanced into the gardens of the castle, where Cesar awaited them, at the head of his cavalry. In the presence of danger, the duke's energies revived; he threw himself upon his enemies, calling loudly upon Orsino, in order to slay him if they met; but either Orsino heard not the challenge, or declined the combat, so that after an obstinate struggle, Cesar saw his unequally-matched forces cut to pieces, and notwithstanding a display of the greatest personal courage, was obliged to re-enter the Vatican. He found the pope expiring; tired of a contest with him, upon his promise given to the Duke of Valentinois, the Orsini, through Pandolfo Petrucci, had bribed the surgeon of his holiness, who had placed a poisoned plaster upon a sore in his leg. He was at the point of death, when, pursued by his enemies, and covered with dust and blood, Cesar entered his apartments; the pope raised himself in his bed, gave him the key of the corridor, leading to the castle of St. Angelo, and an order to the governor to receive and defend him to the last extremity, and to allow him to quit the fortress when he desired. Cesar took his daughters and the youthful Dukes of Sermoneta and of Nepi, and led them to the last refuge which remained. The same night the pope expired, after a reign of only twenty-six days. At the moment of his death, at about two in the morning, Cesar, who had thrown himself upon his bed, heard the door of his room open, and not knowing what could cause this visit, at such an hour, he raised himself upon his side and grasped his sword, but at a glance he recognised his nocturnal visiter—it was Julian de la Rovere. Half consumed by poison, abandoned by his troops, fallen from his high estate—he, who could do nothing for himself, could make a pope! Julian came to purchase his votes: Cesar proposed the terms—they were accepted. Elected pope, Julian should aid Cesar to recover his estates; Cesar was to remain general of the church; and François Marie de la Rovere, Prefect of Rome, was to marry one of Cesar's daughters. Upon these terms Cesar sold his votes to Julian.

On the 31st of October, 1503, Julian de la Rovere was elected pope; and his first care upon his enthronement was to recal Cesar, who, now recovering his health, began also to occupy himself with the recovery of his domains and power. In fact, the defeat of his army, his retreat to the castle of St. Angelo, where he was now supposed to be confined, had already produced great changes in the Romagna. The whole of the towns of this extensive district had either revolted or returned to the sway of their former possessors, the citadels excepted, which in all cases had remained faithful to the Duke of Valentinois. Thus it was not the defection of the towns, which might readily be reconquered, that disturbed the pope or Cesar, but it was the claim of right that Venice had advanced towards them; for, freed from her eternal enemies, the Turks, Venice had begun to push her troops towards the Romagna, which she had always coveted, and had placed them under the command of Jacobo Venieri, who had failed in an attack upon Cesena, owing to the courage of its citizens; but this failure had been compensated by the surrender of the fortresses of Val de Lamone, Faenza, Firlempopoli, and of Rimini, which Pandolfo Malatesta exchanged for the lordship of Citadella, in the territory of Padua, and the rank of a Venetian noble. Cesar now proposed to the pope to make a temporary cession of his estates to him, that thus the respect the Venetians bore to the papal authority might save the cities from their attacks; "but," says Guicciardini, "the pope, in whom ambition, so natural to sovereigns, had not entirely stifled every feeling of probity, declined it, fearing to yield subsequently to the temptation of their retention." Meanwhile, as the danger was urgent, he proposed to Cesar to quit Rome, to embark at Ostia, and proceed by sea to Spezzia, where Michelotto was to join him at the head of one hundred men-at-arms and a hundred light horse, the remains of his splendid army, and thence advance by land to Ferrara and Imola, where once arrived, he should sound his battle-cry, so that it should be re-echoed throughout the Romagna. It was advice after Cesar's heart; he instantly accepted it, and the resolution was ratified by the decision of the Sacred College. Cesar felt at last free; once more he anticipated the pleasure of mounting his war-horse, and commanding an army in the places where he had already fought; when, upon reaching Ostia, he was overtaken by the cardinals of Serrento and Volterra, who now asked in the pope's name the cession of those very fortresses which three days before he had declined. It arose from the circumstance that the Venetians, having made fresh conquests, the pope perceived Cesar's scheme to be the only one that could arrest their further progress. But Cesar now in his turn declined their cession, distrustful of this sudden change, and, fearful it might conceal some snare, he declared the pope's request to be useless, since he trusted to be in the

Romagna within eight days. On the following morning, as he stepped on board the galley, he was arrested in the pope's name. For a moment he felt that he was lost; well acquainted with the process in such cases, he knew how short is the passage from the prison to the tomb; an act so much easier in his respect, as certainly, if the pope willed, there was no deficiency of pretexts to form a charge against him. But the heart of Giulio II. was of a different temperament to his own—sudden in anger, but open to clemency; so that, upon his return to Rome in custody of his guards, the irritation caused by his refusal abated, and he was received by the pope in his palace with his accustomed courtesy, although it was easy to perceive that he was watched. In return for this reception, Cesar consented to the cession of the fortress of Cesena, as a town which having belonged, should revert to the church; whereupon the pope, placing this act, signed by Cesar, in the hands of Pietro Oviedo, he ordered him to go and take possession of the fortress in the name of the holy see. Pietro Oviedo obeyed, and, empowered by this act of cession, he presented himself before Don Diego Chignone, a Spanish condottiere, who held the fortress in the duke's name; but, after perusing the paper, Don Chignone replied, that knowing his lord and master to be a prisoner, it would be base for him to obey an order most probably obtained by violence; and that as for the bearer of it he deserved death, for having undertaken so disgraceful a commission; and therefore he ordered his soldiers to seize upon Oviedo, and throw him down from the battlements, which order was obeyed upon the spot. This act of fidelity proved nearly fatal to Cesar, for, upon hearing of the death of his officer, the pope was so excited, that for the second time his prisoner gave himself up for lost; he was therefore the first to propose terms, which were drawn up as a treaty, and rendered valid by a bull. By these Cesar was bound to cede within forty days the fortresses of Cesena and of Bertinoro, and to countersign the order for the surrender of Forli, and this upon the guarantee of two bankers of Rome, who were bound in a sum of fifteen thousand ducats, the amount of the expenses which the governor alleged had been incurred in the place upon the duke's account. Upon his part, the pope agreed to conduct Cesar to Ostia under the guard only of the Cardinal St. Croix and of two officers, who should set him at liberty upon the completion of his engagements; but in case of their non-fulfilment, Cesar would be reconducted to Rome, and confined in the castle of St. Angelo. Still fearing that even after the cession of the fortresses Giulio II. might violate his promise and detain him prisoner, he made application through the Cardinals Borgia and Remolino, who had retired to Naples, for a pass to Gonzalvo de Cordova, and two galleys to enable him to rejoin him; the safeconduct arrived, and a courier announced that the galleys would not be long delayed. Upon this, and hearing that by the duke's orders the governors of Cesena and of Bertinoro had given up these fortresses to the captains of his holiness, the Cardinal St. Croix relaxed by degrees the severity of his restraint, and permitted him, aware that he would soon be set at liberty, to go out without a guard. Fearful, therefore, of another detention at the moment of his embarkation, he concealed himself in a house beyond the city walls, and at nightfall, mounting a peasant's horse, he gained Nettuno, where, hiring a small bark, he set sail for Monte Dragone, and from thence reached Naples. Gonzalvo welcomed him with so much cordiality, that

Cesar was deceived, and thought himself safe at last. This confidence was redoubled, when, relating his designs to Gonzalvo, having stated he trusted to gain Pisa, and from thence to pass into the Romagna, Gonzalvo allowed him to enlist at Naples as many soldiers as he desired, promising also two galleys to enable him to embark with them. Thus deceived, he remained six weeks at Naples, in daily communication with Gonzalvo upon his plans. But the governor had detained him only to gain time to acquaint the King of Spain that his enemy was in his power; so that, confident even to the moment of his embarkation, all his preparations made, Cesar returned to the castle to take leave of Gonzalvo. He received him with his usual courtesy, wished him every prosperity, and embraced him at parting; but at the gate of the castle, one of Gonzalvo's officers, named Nuño Compejo, arrested him in the name of Ferdinand the Catholic. He was immediately carried to prison, hopeless of all aid, for the only devoted friend he now had was Michelotto, and he too had been arrested at Pisa by orders of Giulio II. The morning after his arrest, 27th May, 1504, he was taken on board a galley, which set sail for Spain, where, upon his disembarkation, he was confined in the castle of Medina-del-Campo. Ten years subsequent to this, Gonzalvo, proscribed in his turn, avowed at Loxa, upon his death-bed, that two actions of his life then burthened his conscience—the one his treason towards Ferdinand, the other his betrayal of Cesar.

The Duke of Valentinois remained two years in prison, always hoping that Louis XII. would reclaim him from his captors as a peer of France; but the king, paralysed by the loss of the battle of Garigliano, which deprived him of the kingdom of Naples, was too much occupied with his own to think of the interests of his cousin. He began to despair, when, breaking one morning the loaf supplied for his breakfast, he found therein a file, a phial containing a narcotic liquid, and a note from Michelotto, to acquaint him that having escaped from prison, he had followed him into Spain, and was now concealed with the Count of Benevento, in the adjoining village: he added, that from the next day the count and he would await his arrival every night upon the road from the fortress to the village, with three fleet horses, and that therefore it was for him to avail himself of the means placed at his disposal. Thus, when the world had abandoned the Duke of Romagna, a servant was faithful in misfortune. Freedom was too great a boon for Cesar to neglect: the same day he used the file upon the bars of the window, which opened upon an inner court, and had soon so loosened them, that it needed but a slight blow to detach them. But, besides that this window was sixty feet from the ground, the entrance to the court was by a postern door reserved for the governor, of which he alone had the key, which never quitted his possession: here was then the principal obstacle. But, prisoner as he was, he had been invariably treated with the respect due to his rank, dining every day with the commandant, who received him at his table with the manners of a noble and courteous gentleman. This baron being also an old captain, having honourably served King Ferdinand, [illegible] his orders, yet felt a great respect [illegible] whose career of his battles he listened to with pleasure. He insisted that Cesar should sup as well as dine at his table, which hitherto he had [illegible], he had been enabled [illegible] the [illegible]. Now it happened on the day they were received, Cesar, going up to his room, made a false step and sprained his foot; at the dinner hour he tried to come down, but pretended to suffer so much that he gave up the attempt. On the morning, not being better, the governor visited him as before, but finding his prisoner low-spirited and wearied by his solitude, he offered to come and sup with him. Cesar accepted this offer very gratefully. It was now for the prisoner to act the part of the host; Cesar's manner was, therefore, animated and courteous; and the governor, profiting by this circumstance, spoke to him upon the subject of his arrest, and as an old Castilian, for whom honour had still its charms, inquired as to the truth of the imputed breach of faith of Ferdinand and Gonzalvo. Cesar showed every willingness to explain the matter, but indicated by a sign that the servants should retire. This precaution appeared so natural, that the governor desired them to withdraw. Cesar filled his glass and that of the governor, and proposed the health of the king. He then commenced his narrative, but hardly had he done so ere the eyes of his host became fixed as by magic, and he fell upon the table in a profound sleep.* Upon the return of the servants, they found the two guests one upon the other beneath the table; which not being an event sufficiently extraordinary to induce them to pay any particular attention to it, they contented themselves by carrying Don Manuel to his chamber, and by placing Cesar upon his bed; then closing the door with the greatest care, they left the prisoner alone. For a moment he remained motionless, as if plunged in the deepest sleep; then, as he heard the steps echo in the distance, he raised his head, glided from his bed, walked towards the door, slowly it is true, but without appearing to suffer by the injury to his foot; then raising his head proudly, he seemed to breathe freely for the first time since the departure of his keepers. There was no time to lose; he fastened the door as firmly within as it was secured without; he put out his lamp, opened the window, and removed its bars. This done, he took off the bandages from his limb, tore the curtains from his window and from his bed, and cut them into strips, adding to this his sheets, table cloth, and napkins. By these he formed a kind of rope of about sixty feet in length, with knots at intervals, tied it firmly to the bar yet remaining in the window, and then descended, grasping it firmly by his feet and hands. He reached its extremity without an accident, but as he hung by its last knot he sought in vain for the earth with his feet—the rope was too short. His situation was fearful; the darkness of the night rendered it impossible for him to ascertain the distance from the ground, and his fatigue cut off all hopes of being able to reascend. He hesitated for a moment, let the cord go, and fell from about fifteen feet to the earth. His peril was too great to permit his noticing a few contusions he received; he arose immediately, and, guiding himself by the direction of his window, went direct to the door opening from the court; here he stopped, a cold sweat stood upon his brow, for, whether he had forgotten it in his room or had lost it in his fall he knew not—he had not the key. Recollecting himself, he was soon convinced that the latter was the only probable cause of its loss; he therefore traversed the court, endeavouring to find the place where it could have fallen; but the key was so small, and the night so dark, that he almost dispaired of success; but, nevertheless, as upon this now depended his safety, he redoubled every effort he had made. A door suddenly opened, and a patrol advanced, preceded by torches; he now thought escape impossible, but, recollecting a cistern which was behind him, he immediately plunged into it, leaving his head only above the water, and anxiously followed the movements of the soldiers, who passed within a few steps of him, crossed the courtyard, and disappeared through another door. Short as was the interval, Cesar's eye had espied by the light of their torches the key so long desired; and hardly had the door closed upon the soldiers when he was master of his liberty. Halfway from the castle to the village two men on horseback, with another ready saddled, met him; these were the count and Michelotto; Cesar grasped the hands of both, and immediately galloped towards the frontiers of Navarre, which he reached in three days, and where he was warmly welcomed by the king, Jean d'Albret, the brother of his wife. From Navarre, Cesar had calculated upon passing into France, and thence, with the aid of Louis XII., on making an attempt for the recovery of his estates in Italy; but during his captivity the king had made peace with Ferdinand of Spain; so that upon hearing of his escape, instead of assisting him, as he had a right to expect, he deprived him of the duchy of Valentinois and of his annuity. But there yet remained to him two hundred thousand ducats with the bankers of Genoa; he wrote to desire the transmission to him of this sum, with which he hoped to raise some troops in Spain and Navarre, and thus to attack Pisa. Five hundred men, two hundred thousand ducats, his name, and his sword, were more than was requisite still to justify the indulgence of hope. The bankers denied the deposit. Cesar was at the mercy of his brother-in-law. One of the vassals of the King of Navarre had just then revolted; Cesar assumed the command of the troops that Jean d'Albret sent against him, followed by Michelotto, the faithful companion of his prosperity and misfortunes. Owing to his courage and excellent arrangements, the Prince Alarino was at first defeated; but rallying his forces soon after, he renewed the engagement. It was obstinately maintained for nearly four hours, when, towards dusk, Cesar wished to decide the battle by charging himself at the head of a hundred men-at-arms, against a corps of cavalry, which formed the main force of the enemy; but, to his great surprise, they fled in the direction of a little wood, wherein they seemed desirous to take refuge. Cesar pursued them to its outskirts, when suddenly they faced about, and three or four hundred archers rushed from its coverts to their assistance. Cesar's troops, perceiving they had fallen into an ambuscade, immediately fled, and basely abandoned their commander. Alone, yet he would not recoil one step; he had probably become weary of life, and his heroism was perchance as much the result of disgust as courage. Whatever it might proceed from, he defended himself like a lion at bay; but, pierced with arrows and cross-bow bolts, his horse fell with him, and rolled over upon his leg. His opponents immediately rushed upon him, and one thrusting at him with a sharp-pointed spear, pierced his corslet, and ran him through the chest. Cesar uttered a blasphemy against Heaven, and died. The enemy, however, owing to the courage of Michelotto, was defeated; but, upon returning to the camp, he heard from those who had deserted Cesar that he had not since been seen. Too well assured, from the known courage of his master, that he had fallen, he wished to give the last sad proof of his attachment, by not leaving his body to wolves and birds of prey. He caused torches to be lighted, and, accompanied by a dozen of those who had pursued the cavalry with Cesar to the wood, he commenced his search for his master's body. On reaching the spot, they found five men lying dead side by side; four were yet in their armour, but the fifth was entirely stripped. Michelotto alighted from his horse, raised the head upon his knee, and by the light of the torches recognised the Duke of Romagna. Thus fell, on the 10th March, 1507, upon a field of battle now unknown, near an obscure village called Viana, and in a miserable skirmish with the vassals of a petty prince, he whom Machiavelli has held up to the respect of princes, as a model of address, of policy, and of valour.

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* The poison of the Borgias, according to contemporaneous authors, was of two sorts—the solid and the liquid. The first was a kind of white meal, almost impalpable, having the taste of sugar, which was called cantarelle. Its composition is unknown. The liquid (according to the accounts given of it) was prepared in too singular a manner to be passed over in silence: we but relate what has been written, fearful that modern science may negative the circumstances recorded. A bear was made to swallow a strong dose of arsenic; then, at the moment it began to act, he was suspended by his hind feet; convulsions quickly succeeded, and a copious deadly stream of foam was discharged from the animal's throat. It was this, collected in a silver plate, and kept in a bottle hermetically sealed, that formed the liquid poison.

Lucretia, the beautiful Duchess of Ferrara, died full of years and honours, adored by her subjects as a queen, and addressed by Ariosto and Bembo *as a goddess.*

THE COUNTESS OF SAINT-GERAN.

CHAPTER I.

TOWARDS the close of the year 1639, a party of horsemen arrived, about noon, in a little village at the extremity of Auvergne, from the Parisian side. The country people assembled at the noise, and recognised the provost of the district and his attendants. The heat was overpowering, the horses were wet with sweat, the riders were covered with dust, and appeared to be returning from some important expedition. One of the escort, detaching himself from the rest, inquired of an old woman, who was spinning at her door, whether there was any inn in the place. This woman and the children pointed out to him a sign hanging above a door, at the bottom of the only street in the village; and the party once more put itself in motion. Among these horsemen was observed a young man of noble mien, richly dressed, who appeared to be a prisoner. This discovery redoubled the curiosity of the crowd, and the peasants followed the cavalcade to the door of the inn. The landlord came forward, cap in hand, and the provost demanded of him, with an air of authority, if his paltry town was sufficiently large to accommodate his party, man and beast. The host replied, that he had the best wine in the country to offer to his majesty's servants, and that there would be no difficulty in collecting in the neighbourhood sufficient litter and provender for their horses. The provost listened with an air of incredulity to these magnificent promises, gave the necessary orders to his followers how they should dispose of themselves, and dismounted from his horse with a muttered oath, drawn from him by the heat and fatigue. The horsemen placed themselves closely round the young man; one held his stirrup, and the provost made way for him with deference as he entered the inn. There could be no further doubt that he was a prisoner of importance, and every one began to wonder who he could be. The men asserted that it must have been some great crime, for which a young gentleman of such quality had been permitted to be arrested; the women, on the contrary, maintained that it was impossible that any one with so noble an air should be otherwise than innocent.

In the interior of the inn all was in an uproar; the assistants hurried from cellar to garret, the host swore and despatched his servants to the neighbours; while the hostess scolded her daughter, who remained motionless at the window of the little parlour, gazing at the handsome young man.

There were two tables in the principal room of the village inn. The provost went to the one, and gave up the other to the soldiers, who left the room, one by one, to look to their horses, stabled in a shed in the court-yard; he then seated himself on a stool, opposite the prisoner, and, striking the table with his heavy cane, commenced a conversation with him.

"Ah!" cried he, with a groan of weariness, "I ask your pardon, Monsieur le Marquis, for the miserable wine I am compelled to offer you."

The young man smiled gaily.

"The wine matters not, Mr. Provost," he answered, "but I do not conceal from you that I regret our halt; for, however entertained I may be with your company, I am in haste to escape from my ridiculous situation, and anxious to reach our destination, the sooner to put a stop to this foolish affair."

The host's daughter, who was approaching the table, carrying a pewter pot, fixed her eyes, at these words, upon the prisoner with a satisfied look, which seemed to say, "I knew that he was innocent."

"However," continued the marquis, raising his glass to his lips, "this wine is not so bad as you say, Mr. Provost."

Then, turning to the young girl, who was staring at his gloves and embroidered ruff, he gaily drank her health.

"But," said the provost, who was astonished at this easy indifference, "I trust you will excuse your poor accommodation for the night."

"What," said the marquis, "are we to sleep here?"

"Sir," replied the provost, "we have sixteen long leagues to go; our horses are knocked up; and as for me, I declare to you that I am no better than my horse."

The marquis beat impatiently upon the table, and showed all the signs of great vexation. The provost, in the mean time, sighed with pain, stretched out his immense boots, and wiped his forehead with his handkerchief. He was big and pursy, with a puffed up face, and not made for the endurance of more than ordinary fatigue.

"Monsieur le Marquis," he continued, "although your company, to return your compliments, is very agreeable to me, you cannot doubt that I wish to enjoy it upon a better footing. If it is in your power, as you say, to deliver yourself from the hands of the law, it is my fervent desire that you may soon do so. But I beseech you to consider in what a state we are. For my part, it is impossible that I can continue in the saddle one hour longer to-day; and you yourself, are you not oppressed with this long ride in such hot weather?"

"I must confess I am," said the marquis, affecting to let his arms fall wearily to his side.

"Well, then, let us rest here for the night; we will sup, if we can, and start again to-morrow, with renewed strength, in the freshness of the morning."

"So let it be then," replied the marquis; "but let us pass the time in a creditable way. Here are two pistoles, for these brave fellows to drink with. It is but right that they should regale at my expense, since it is on my account they have so much trouble."

He threw two pieces of gold upon the soldiers' table, who shouted in chorus, "Long live the marquis!" The provost rose, went out to post sentinels, and from thence returned to the kitchen, where he ordered the best supper that could be obtained. The soldiers procured dice, and began playing and drinking. The marquis hummed a tune, curling his moustache, pirouetting round the room, and looking here and there, unobserved by them; then, drawing softly a purse from a concealed part of his dress, as the girl of the house came and went, he threw his arms round her neck as if to embrace her, and, sliding ten louis into her hand, he whispered in her ear, "The key of the outer door in my chamber, and a couple of bottles to the sentinels, will save my life."

The girl drew back to the door, and returned an expressive look, seeming to say *yes* to his request. The provost came in, and two hours afterwards the supper was ready. He ate and drank like a man who can support fatigue better at table than on horseback. The marquis plied him with bumpers, and, sleep aiding the fumes of some tolerably strong wine, he began to nod and half close his eyes:

"Morbleu! Monsieur le Marquis, I cannot believe you to be such a great villain as they say; you seem to me rather to have the air of a good fellow."

The marquis thought him quite drunk, and began to coax the girl of the house; but to his great disappointment, when the hour came for him to retire, the provost summoned his sergeant, gave him his instructions in a low voice, and declared loudly that he would himself have the honour to conduct M. le Marquis to his bedroom, and that he would not go to rest until he had rendered him that duty. Accordingly, with three of his men carrying lights, he accompanied the marquis to his room, and having made himself perfectly acquainted with its situation, he left him with ceremonious respect.

The marquis threw himself, booted as he was, upon his bed, and listened to a clock which was striking nine. He heard the noise of the horsemen, moving to and fro in the stables and the courtyard.

In an hour later, however, as every one was fatigued, all had sunk into silence. Then the prisoner softly rose, and, groping along, sought upon the chimney, the table, and in the pockets of his clothes, for the key which he expected to find. It was not there. Nevertheless, he could not be mistaken in the tender interest of the young girl; he could not believe that she had been making game of him. The marquis's chamber had a window which looked out upon the street, and a door opening upon a crazy wooden gallery, which formed the balcony, and from which the staircase descended through the most frequented rooms of the house. This gallery extended along the courtyard, at the same height from the ground as the window. The marquis's only alternative, therefore, was to leap either from the one or the other, and he remained a long time in doubt which course to adopt. He had almost made up his mind to throw himself into the street, at the risk of breaking his neck, when a gentle knock was heard at the door. He started with joy, and as he opened it said, "I am saved." An indistinct shadow glided into the room; it was the girl, trembling in every limb; she had not the power of uttering a word. The marquis reassured her by his caresses.

"Ah, sir," said she, "I shall die if they discover me."

"But," answered the marquis, "your fortune is made if you effect my escape."

"God is my witness, that I would do so with all my heart; but I have such bad news——"

She stopped, overwhelmed with conflicting emotions. The poor girl had come to him with bare feet, fearful of the noise of her shoes being heard, and was shivering with cold and terror.

"What is it?" inquired the marquis, impatiently.

"Before he went to bed," continued she, "the provost ordered my father to deliver to him all the keys in the house, and made him swear a solemn oath that he had retained none. My father has given him all:

and, more than that, there is a sentinel placed at every door of the house; but they are very tired. I overheard them murmuring, and I gave them more wine than you told me."

"They will fall asleep," said the marquis; "and, at any rate, it is a great piece of good fortune that they have granted to my quality the privilege of not bolting me into this room."

"There is," said the girl, "a passage from the garden, leading into the fields, which is only closed by a gate of no great strength; but——"

"Where is my horse?"

"In the stable, doubtless, with the others."

"I shall jump into the yard."

"You will kill yourself."

"So much the better!"

"Ah! Monsieur le Marquis, what can you have done?" said the girl, sadly.

"Trifles! hardly any thing; but for which they will take away my life and my honour. I must lose no more time; I am decided."

"Stay," cried the girl, catching him by the arm; "at one corner of the yard there is a large heap of straw, the gallery runs above it——"

"Admirable! I shall make less noise, and do myself less injury."

He made a step, as if to depart; the young girl, without knowing what she did, endeavoured to prevent him, but, disengaging himself from her hold, he opened the door of his room. The moon was shining brightly upon the yard, and not a sound was to be heard. He advanced nearly to the end of the wooden balustrade, and discovered the dunghill, which was of considerable height; the girl made the sign of the cross. The marquis listened attentively, and, hearing nothing, mounted upon the balustrade. He was about to jump, when suddenly deep muttered voices came upon his ear. They proceeded from two horsemen, who were conversing together over a bottle of wine. The marquis held his breath as he regained his door, where the girl was waiting upon the threshold.

"I told you before that it was not yet time," said she to him.

"Have you a knife?" said the marquis, "that I may plant it in the throats of these rascals."

"Wait, I beseech you, wait one hour, only one hour," murmured the girl, "and in that time they will be asleep."

The hour passed, and the marquis once more opened the door. He heard no sound but the distant baying of dogs, in the adjacent country, breaking the deep silence. He leant over the balustrade, and distinctly saw a soldier lying, with his face to the ground, upon some straw.

"Should they awake?" whispered the girl, with emotion.

"At all events, they shall not retake me alive; be calm," said the marquis.

"Farewell, then," said the sobbing girl, "and may heaven protect you!"

He mounted the balustrade, crouched down for a moment, and dropped upon the straw.

The girl saw him run to the shed, saddle a horse, mount it, pass behind the walls of the stable, rush through the garden, spur his horse against the barrier, overturn it, and gain the open country.

The poor girl stood transfixed at the end of the gallery, with her eyes fixed upon the sleeping horseman, ready to disappear at the slightest movement. The noise of the spurs upon the pavement, and the hors hoofs at the bottom of the court, had half roused him. He started up, and, fearing some surprise, ran to the stable. His horse was not there: the marquis, in the haste with which he fled, had taken the first that came, and it happened to be this soldier's. He immediately gave the alarm, and his comrades awoke. Running to the prisoner's room, they found it empty. The provost was roused from his bed, confused and irritated. The prisoner was gone. The girl, who pretended to have just risen, in consequence of the noise, impeded the preparations, concealed the harness, and, under pretext of assisting the horsemen, did every thing in her power to delay them; nevertheless, in a quarter of an hour the whole troop were in full pursuit. The best horses took the lead, and the sentinel, who had mounted the marquis's horse, and had the greatest interest in the capture of the prisoner, having been the principal cause of his escape, advanced considerably before his companions. He was followed by the sergeant, equally well mounted; and as they could see, from the height, by which way he had flown, in a few minutes the fugitive, although at a great distance, was in view.

The marquis, however, lost ground; the horse upon which he was mounted was the worst in the troop, and he had already pushed it to its utmost speed. Turning round, he saw the soldiers within gun-shot of him. In vain he attempted to spur his horse to increased exertion; breathless and exhausted, it stumbled and fell. The marquis rolled with it upon the ground, but, in the act of falling, he grasped the saddle, and perceived, for the first time, that the holsters were furnished with pistols: he remained lying by the horse as if insensible, with a loaded pistol in his hand. The man, who was mounted upon his own valuable steed, and who was about two hundred paces in advance of his sergeant, was the first that came up. The marquis rose, and, before he had time to make any defence, shot him through the head; the horseman fell, and in an instant the marquis had thrown himself upon his own horse, without putting his foot in the stirrup, spurred it into a gallop, and disappeared like an arrow, leaving the sergeant about fifty paces behind him thunderstruck at what he saw.

The rest of the party came up at a gallop, and seeing the soldier lying in the road, cried out that he was taken; the provost shouting to them, with a stentorian voice, not to kill him; but, on reaching the spot, they discovered that it was the sergeant endeavouring to succour the unfortunate soldier, whose skull was horribly fractured, and who had been killed on the spot.

By this time the marquis was out of sight: fearful of a new pursuit, he had struck into a cross-way, on which he proceeded for an hour without drawing bridle. Having almost cleared the boundaries of the district, and being convinced that, by this time, he was beyond the reach of his poorly-mounted pursuers, he resolved to halt, to refresh his horse. He was riding through a narrow path, when he saw a peasant advancing towards him; throwing him a sous, he inquired of him the way to the Bourbonnais. The man picked up the money, and replied to his question; but appeared hardly to know what he was saying, and gazed earnestly at him, with an amazed countenance. The marquis ordered him to pass on his way, but the peasant planted himself in the middle of the path, and would not move a step. The marquis advanced upon him in a menacing manner, and asked him how he dared have the insolence to gaze at him in that manner?

The peasant, by way of reply, pointed to the shoulder and collar of th fugitive, who now observed, for the first time, that his doublet was soiled with blood, which, joined to his disordered dress, and the mud with which he was covered, gave him a sufficiently frightful appearance.

"I know what it is," said he, "my servant and myself were separated this morning in a rencounter we had with some drunken Germans; and whether it be that I am a little scratched, or that, in collaring one of the rascals, I have transferred some of his blood to my own clothes, I know not, except that this comes of the prank. However, I do not feel at all the worse."

So saying, he affected to laugh heartily.

"Nevertheless," continued he, "I should have no objection to make myself decent; and I am exhausted with thirst and heat; my horse, too, is no better off than myself. Can you inform me where I can refresh myself?"

The peasant offered him the use of his own house, which was at no great distance. A woman and her children, who were working, discontinued their labours, from respect, and went in search of the refreshments he required; wine, water, and fruit, together with a large piece of black bread, were set before him. The marquis sponged his doublet, drank a deep draught, and calling the people of the house, began to question them with apparent indifference. He again obtained information as to the various roads which led to the Bourbonnais, where he was travelling to take refuge with a relation, the different villages, cross-roads, and distances; and from speaking of the country, the crops, and such matters, he proceeded to inquire if any thing of importance had lately occurred in the neighbourhood.

The peasant replied, "That he was astonished there should have been a rencounter upon a road, which was at that time covered with soldiers, who were about to make an important capture."

"Who is it?" inquired the marquis.

"Oh!" said the peasant, "it is a gentleman accused of great crimes."

"What! a gentleman in the hands of justice?"

"Yes, indeed, and who stands a good chance of losing his head!"

"What has he done?"

"Oh! the most abominable things! The whole country is in a ferment about it."

"Do you know him?"

"No, but we have got his description."

As this information was rather alarming, the marquis, after having asked some further questions of the same sort, and thrown some silver to the peasant, mounted his horse, and disappeared in the direction pointed out to him.

The provost had advanced by this time half a league further, although he knew the pursuit to be all but hopeless; he despatched one of the soldiers with directions that descriptions of the fugitive, and orders for his apprehension, might be sent to all quarters of the province, and returned himself to the village from which he had started. Some of the marquis's kinsmen lived in that neighbourhood, and he thought it probable that he would conceal himself with them. The whole village ran out to meet the returning party, who were compelled to confess that they had been outwitted by the handsome prisoner. The country people received this intelligence with different feelings, and it occasioned a great sensation. The provost returned to the inn in high ill-humour, striking his fist on the table, and venting his spleen upon every body that came in his way the girl of the house, relieved from the most torturing anxiety, could hardly conceal her joy.

The provost threw his papers upon the table, as if to nourish his vexation.

"The greatest rascal in the world!" he cried: "why was I not more suspicious!"

"He had such a noble air!" said the hostess.

"An infernal villain! Do you know who he is? He is the Marquis of Saint-Maixent."

"The Marquis of Saint-Maixent!" cried she with horror.

"Yes," replied the provost, "the Marquis of Saint-Maixent, accused, and almost convicted, of uttering false money and of sorcery."

"Ah!"

"Guilty of the crime of incest!"

"Good heavens!"

"Of having strangled his wife, in order to marry another woman, whose husband he had formed a scheme to assassinate!"

"The saints preserve us!"

Every one crossed themselves.

"Yes, good people," continued the furious provost, "this is the amiable nobleman, who has made his escape from the punishment due to his crimes."

"And is there no hope of catching him?" inquired the host.

"But little, I fear, if he has taken the road to the Bourbonnais, for in that province there are many noblemen of his family, who will not suffer him to be retaken."

The fugitive, in fact, was no other than the Marquis of Saint-Maixent, who was accused of all the enormous crimes laid to his charge by the provost, and who, by his audacious flight, rendered himself once more able to take an active part in the strange story which we have yet to relate.

CHAPTER II.

A FORTNIGHT after these events, a horseman rang the bell of the chateau de Saint-Geran, in the neighbourhood of Moulins. The hour was late, and the inmates did not seem in haste to open the gate. The stranger kept the bell in motion, as if he had been master of the chateau, and at last saw a man running towards him from the bottom of the avenue. The servant reconnoitred him through the grate, and being only able, in the dusk of the evening, to distinguish a disordered traveller, with clothes covered with mud, and no sword, inquired of him what he wanted? The stranger replied coolly, that he wished to see the Count de Saint-Geran, and that he was in haste. The servant informed him, that it was impossible, upon which the stranger grew angry.

"Who are you?" inquired the domestic.

"Fool!" cried the horseman, "have done with your nonsense. Go to M. de Saint Geran, and tell him, that the Marquis of Saint-Maixent, his kinsman, wishes to see him immediately."

The servant was profuse in his apologies, opened the gate, and then hastened in advance of the marquis. He proceeded to announce his arrival to the master of the chateau. The count was going to supper when thus interrupted; he immediately rose to receive the marquis, embraced him several times, and gave him a most friendly reception. He wished to hurry him immediately into the supper-room, and to introduce him to his family; but the marquis pointed out to him the state of his dress, and begged to be allowed some few minutes to put himself in order. The count conducted him to his apartment, where he made him dress himself from head to foot in his clothes, and whilst so doing, they entered into conversation. The marquis told some story, we know not what, relative to the accusation against him. But whatever it was, the count continued to testify great interest in behalf of his kinsman, who found that he might calculate upon the chateau de St. Saint-Geran as a place of refuge. When he had finished dressing, he followed the count, who introduced him to the countess and the rest of the family.

It is now necessary that we make our readers acquainted with the inmates of the chateau, and, in order to render the following circumstances more intelligible to them, that we should go back to some circumstances which preceded the commencement of our story.

The Marechal de Saint-Geran, of the noble house of Guiche, and governor of the Bourbonnais, had married Anne de Tournon, by whom he had a son, Claude de la Guiche, and a daughter, who married the Marquis de Bouillé. On the death of his wife he entered into a second marriage with Suzanne aux Epaules, who in like manner was the widow of the Count de Longaunay, to whom she had given a daughter, Suzanne de Longaunay.

The marechal and his lady, Suzanne aux Epaules, for the mutual advantage of their first children, resolved to make a match between them; and, accordingly, Claude de la Guiche, son of the marechal, was married to Suzanne de Longaunay.

This proceeding gave great vexation to the Marchioness de Bouillé, the marechal's daughter, who was living in seclusion with her mother-in-law; besides being, as she said, married to a man who gave her great cause of complaint, and whose only good quality was that he was seventy years of age.

The contract of marriage between Claude de la Guiche and Suzanne de Longaunay was executed at Rouen, on the 17th of February, 1619; but, owing to the extreme youth of the bridegroom, who was yet scarcely eighteen, he was sent on his travels to Italy. He returned at the end of two years; and had it not been for the want of offspring, their marriage would have been, in every point of view, a most happy one. The countess was much afflicted on account of this sterility, which threatened the extinction of a great name and a noble family. She made vows and pilgrimages, consulted physicians and empirics; but all in vain.

The Marechal de Saint-Geran died on the 30th of December, 1632, full of disappointment at not having any descendants from the marriage of his son. Claude, now Count de Saint-Geran, succeeded his father in the government of the Bourbonnais.

In the mean time, the Marchioness de Bouillé had been separated, by divorce, from the old marquis her husband, and had taken up her residence at the chateau de Saint-Geran, very much encouraged by the results of her brother's marriage, whose whole wealth she would succeed to in the e of his leaving no other heir, which at present seemed more than prob

It was in this state of affairs that the Marquis de Saint-Maixent arrived at the chateau. Being young, handsome, lively and agreeable, he found great favour in the eyes of the ladies, and even succeeded in pleasing the widow of the deceased Marechal de Saint-Geran, who was living with her children. He soon saw plainly, too, that he and the Marchioness de Bouillé understood each other.

The fortune of the Marquis de Saint-Maixent was much impaired—almost ruined, indeed—by dissipation and judicial proceedings. The marchioness was the apparent heiress of the count; he calculated upon the speedy death of her husband; and the life of an old septuagenarian was not a sufficient obstacle to embarrass the plans of such a man as the marquis. He resolved to marry the marchioness, and thus become the wealthiest man in the province.

He began, therefore, to pay her all the attentions in his power, without exciting the suspicions of the rest of the family. It was, however, extremely difficult to make himself understood by the marchioness without drawing other eyes upon him. But she, being already prepossessed by his agreeable person, quickly understood him, though they had very few opportunities for confidential intercourse. The countess innocently took part in their conversations. The count frequently carried away the marquis to hunting parties, and they generally spent the day together. M. de Saint-Maixent had not yet said that which every virtuous woman should be deaf to; and in spite of his manœuvres the intrigue crept but slowly on.

The countess, notwithstanding the lapse of twenty years, still clung to the hope that her prayers for an heir to her husband's name would be granted to her. She had confided, with unwearied credulity, in all sorts of quacks, who in those days obtained belief, even from people of quality. At one time she sent for a kind of astrologer from Italy, who, by the use of some horrible medicine, almost succeeded in poisoning her, and was obliged to fly for refuge to his own country, too happy to escape so easily. This affair drew upon Madame de Saint-Geran the serious remonstrances of her confessor; till at length, by the assistance of time, she became accustomed to the painful conviction that she would never have a child, and sought consolation in the duties of religion. The count, who treated her with unvarying tenderness, had long since given up the hope of an heir, and had made his will accordingly. The expectations of the marchioness were now changed into certainty, and M. de Saint-Maixent, perfectly secure on his part, did not hesitate any longer with regard to his intentions respecting Madame de Bouillé. Such was the state of affairs when, about the end of November, 1640, the Count of Saint-Geran was compelled, by some affairs of moment, to set off with all speed to Paris.

The countess, who could not endure the thought of being separated from her husband, proposed that she should accompany him. The marquis, delighted with the opportunity which would leave him almost alone in the chateau with Madame de Bouillé, represented the journey to Paris in such glowing colours, that every one decided in favour of the plan. The marchioness, on her part, had been manœuvring with the same object. It was agreed, therefore, that the countess should accompany her husband; and, after a few days of preparation, they departed upon their journey.

The marquis had now no hesitation in disclosing his passion to its fullest extent, and found no difficulty in securing the hold which he already had upon Madame de Bouillé. He affected the most violent love, and she fully responded to his advances. They escaped the observation of the domestics by long walks, and would often pass the whole day in some retired corner of the park, or shut up in the apartments of the chateau. But it was impossible that these doings should not give rise to certain rumours among a whole host of servants; and, accordingly, such rumours soon began to circulate.

The marchioness found it necessary to gain over, by means of bribes, her waiting maids, two sisters, of the name of Quinet. She had no great difficulty in effecting this object, for they were both devoted to her person. This was the first degradation of Madame de Bouillé, and the first step in the corruption of her creatures, who from this time became deeply engaged in a most infamous conspiracy. There was at the chateau de Saint-Geran an upper servant, a pompous, self-conceited personage, with just sufficient intelligence to be able to execute a bad action without the ability to devise one. This man was placed in authority over all the other servants; originally a poor peasant, whom the marechal had taken into his service, he had been promoted by the count, step by step, to the post of steward, on account of his long service in the family. He was thus, in the count's absence, left in charge of the servants and establishment. The marquis took this man apart, sounded him cunningly, gave him money, and gained him over completely. These several agents undertook to stop the gossip of the servants' hall; and from that time the lovers were able to carry on their intrigue without restraint.

One evening, as M. de Saint-Maixent and the marchioness were at supper, *tête-à-tête*, they heard a loud ringing at the gate of the chateau, and presently a noise, to which they did not at first pay much attention. In the mean time a courier, who had arrived express from Paris, had already dismounted in the courtyard, with a letter from the Count de Saint-Geran to the marquis. He was brought into the room, followed by nearly the whole establishment. The marquis inquired the meaning of the turmoil, and made a sign of dismissal to the crowd of domestics; but the courier exclaimed, that M. le Comte had given orders that the letter of which he was the bearer should be read to the whole house. The marquis opened it without reply, ran his eye over the contents, and, without the least alteration of manner, read it in a distinct and loud voice. The count announced to his good kinsfolk, and to his whole house, that the countess had at length shown the usual symptoms of being *enceinte;* that almost immediately upon her arrival at Paris these signs had begun to show themselves; and that there remained in the minds of the medical men no doubt as to her situation: that, as to himself, he was in the greatest joy at this event, which had ever been the height of his wishes. He directed, therefore, that all sorts of rejoicings should be immediately commenced; informed them that his letter would only precede their arrival at the chateau by a few days, and that the countess, for greater security, would be conveyed thither in a litter; and concluded by desiring various sums of money to be distributed amongst the domestics.

The servants shouted for joy; the marquis and the marchioness exchanged but one look, but that look was sufficient to express their feelings. They contained themselves, however, sufficiently to put on the appearance of great satisfaction; and the marquis even went so far as to congratulate the domestics upon their attachment to their master and mistress. The guilty pair, left by themselves, listened gloomily to the noise of fireworks, and sounds of music under the windows. They remained for some time in silence, musing on what they had heard. Their first reflection was, that the count and countess were mistaken; that the symptoms of which he wrote were common and insignificant; that it was impossible to suppose that any thing of the sort should occur after the lapse of twenty years; and, in short, that it was a false alarm.

The next day they walked together in a solitary part of the park, and discussed the chances of their situation. M. de Saint-Maixent pointed out to the marchioness the enormous loss that this occurrence must occasion her; he then remarked, that, supposing the news to be true, there were still several dangerous stages to be passed through. He trusted that no accident would happen to the countess, and that the accouchement might be successful. "The child may die," said he at last.

He went on to make some remarks upon the small evil that the loss of such a being, without mind, interests, or consequence, would be to the world. It was only, he said, *an ill-organized piece of matter.* "Yet, why should we disturb ourselves?" continued he, impatiently; "the countess is not with child; it is not so—cannot be."

A gardener, who was working near them, overheard this part of their conversation, but, as they were walking away from him at the time, he was unable to hear any thing more.

A few days after this some servants on horseback appeared at the chateau; they had been sent forward by the count, with the information that their master and mistress were only a little way behind. Accordingly they were quickly followed by the travellers. The countess was in the litter, and the count on horseback by her side. They were received in great triumph: all the peasantry had left their labours, and were rending the air with their shouts. The domestics ran out to meet their mistress; the oldest among them wept with joy at seeing the count so happy, and at the thought that his noble qualities would now be perpetuated in his heir. The Marquis de Saint-Maixent and Madame de Bouillé did their best to assume the appearance of the joy which animated every one else.

The widow of the deceased Marechal de Saint-Geran hastened to the chateau the same day; and she, who had expressed the greatest doubts of the intelligence, became now fully convinced of its truth. The count and his wife were very much beloved in the province: this event caused, therefore, general satisfaction, particularly in those numerous families who were attached to them by the ties of blood. During the two or three following days upwards of twenty ladies of quality arrived, in all haste, upon a visit to the chateau, to show how much they were interested in the condition of the countess. The usual symptoms had now become so manifest, that no remaining doubt could be felt in the minds of any one, and the country physicians were perfectly agreed in opinion. The count retained one of these physicians at the chateau, and consulted with the Marquis de Saint-Maixent about procuring an experienced midwife, who, he also intended, should reside in the chateau. The count's mother, who was to give a name to the child, ordered the most expensive and magnificent presents to be prepared.

The marchioness, in the mean time, had stifled her vexation; and amongst people who were blinded by their own joy, none perceived the feelings which preyed on her mind. She daily saw the marquis, who only augmented her disappointment and irritation by repeating that the count and countess were enjoying her misfortune, and by insinuating that this expected birth was a mere fabrication, invented in order to disinherit her. He had begun, as usual in such cases, by corrupting the marchioness's mind, and gradually making her familiar with the idea of crime.

The marquis was one of those libertines, happily so rare in those times (which, after all, were not so bad as they have been called), who could turn the last discoveries in science to the account of atheism. It is worthy of remark, that all the great criminals of that time, Saint-Croix for example, and Exili, the atrocious poisoners, were also the greatest free-thinkers, and had outstripped the most learned men of the day in the study of philosophy, as well as in the science of physics, from which they acquired the knowledge of the composition of their poisons. Passion, interest, and hate, struggled in favour of the marquis in the breast of Madame de Bouillé; and she consented to all that he required of her.

The Marquis de Saint-Maixent had a man in his service, crafty, bold, and dexterous, whom he had sent for from his estates; a confidential servant, quite worthy of such a master. This man he had despatched on some business in the neighbourhood of Saint-Geran.

One evening, as the marquis was going to bed, the man returned from one of his expeditions, came into his apartment, and putting a paper in his hand, on which were written some names of places and persons, informed him that he had discovered the object of his search.

The next morning, at day-break, the marquis had two of his horses saddled, pretending that an affair of importance called him home. Leaving word that he would be absent for three or four days, and begging that his apologies might be given to the count, he set off at full speed, followed by his servant. That night they slept at a small inn, on the road to Auvergne, in order to mislead people who might recognize them; then, travelling by cross roads, they arrived in two days at a large town in quite a different direction.

In the outskirts of this town there resided a woman, who exercised the profession of a midwife, but who, it was said, had mysterious and infamous secrets, which she made known to such persons as would pay her well for the information. At any rate, she made a large profit from the influence which her art gave her over credulous people. She professed to cure the cruels, prepared philters, and love potions, managed intrigues, and even practised sorcery for the country-people about. She had, however, managed so well, that her real character was but little known, except by those unfortunate persons who were as much interested in the preservation of her secrets as herself; and as her assistance was never given, except for a stipulated sum of money, she lived in tolerable prosperity, in a house which belonged to herself, and of which, as being more convenient for her proceedings, she was the only inmate. Moreover, she enjoyed a good reputation in her trade, and was held in great regard by many persons of high quality. The name of this woman was Louise Goillard.

As she was sitting alone one evening, she heard a violent knocking at her door. Accustomed to receive guests at all hours of the night, she took up her lamp and opened the door without hesitation. An armed man burst into the room, apparently in great agitation. Louise was so startled and terrified by this apparition, that she fell into a chair: it was the Marquis de Saint-Maixent.

"Compose yourself, my good woman," said the stranger, interrupting her as she was about to speak; "be calm, I pray you, it is not you, but I who should be agitated. I am no malefactor; and instead of your having any thing to fear from me, I am come to request your assistance."

He threw his cloak into a corner, unbuckled his belt, and laid aside his sword, then dropping wearily into a chair, he requested permission to take some repose.

The marquis wore a travelling dress, and although he did not make himself known, Louise Goillard saw at a glance that he was far from being what she had at first believed; that he was, on the contrary, a gentleman of quality whom her good fortune had brought there.

"I pray you to pardon me," said she, "a mistrust, which did you injustice. Your entrance was so sudden, that I had not time to see whom I had the honour of receiving. My house stands in a solitary situation, I am alone, and there are people who would take advantage of these things to ruin a poor lone woman, who has no need of additional misfortunes—times are so bad. You seem faint—shall I bring you a little wine?"

"Let me have only a glass of water."

Louise Goillard stepped into another room, and returned with water.

The marquis having put it to his lips, and seemed to drink, said "I am come from a great distance, upon a matter of the utmost importance, and reckon upon your assistance."

He felt in his pocket, and drew from it a purse, which he passed to and fro in his hands.

"First," continued he, "I shall require you to swear that you will observe the strictest secrecy."

"It is not necessary with us," said Louise Goillard, "in our business it is always the first condition."

"I must have, however, stronger guarantees—I must have your oath that you will reveal to no one what I am about to tell you."

"I give you my word, since you require it; but once again, it is unnecessary—you do not know me."

"Consider that the matters of which I am about to speak are most important, that it is as if I were placing my life in your hands; and that I would sooner sacrifice my own life a thousand times, than that this secret should be revealed to any one."

"And you will please also to consider," calmly replied the woman, "that we ourselves have the greatest interest in the preservation of the secrets intrusted to us; that one indiscretion may lose us the confidence of our employers, and in some cases, perhaps——you may proceed without hesitation."

The marquis, much encouraged by her apparent sincerity, consented.

"I know you to be a very skilful woman."

"In your service I should wish to prove so."

"That you have carried the study of your art as far as possible."

"You have, perhaps, overrated the merits of your humble servant."

"And that, in your labours, you have discovered the means of knowing the future."

"In that you are mistaken."

"I have been told it as true."

"You have been deceived."

“ Why should you deny it ? Do you already refuse to be of use to me ?”

Louise Goillard held out on this point for a long time ; she could not believe that a man of his quality could give credence to her powers of prophecy, which she only professed to the common people and rich farmers ; but the marquis appeared so serious, that she knew not what to think.

“ Listen,” said he, “ it is useless to attempt to deceive me—I know all. Be calm ; we play a game with a thousand to one in your favour ; and, besides, here is something, in the mean time, to make up to you for my importunities.”

He laid a pile of gold upon the table. The woman feebly admitted that she occasionally made trials of astrological combinations, but that they did not always succeed, and that she had been led on so far solely by their connexion with the phenomena of her art. The secret of her nefarious practices was thus forced in its first intrenchments.

“ If it is so,” replied the marquis, “ you must be already aware of my situation. You must already know that, hurried away by blind and ardent passion, I have betrayed the confidence of an old gentleman of quality, violated the laws of hospitality, by seducing his daughter, in his own house—that things are now come to extremity with me, and that this young lady, whom I love to distraction, being in a state which cannot longer be concealed, is on the point of losing her life and honour by the discovery of her fault, which indeed is mine.”

The woman answered, that nothing could be foreseen respecting any one, saving by particular interrogations ; and to produce effect upon the marquis, she brought into the room a kind of box, covered with ciphers and strange-looking emblems. She opened it, and having combined some figures which it contained, said that it was quite true, and that the marquis's situation was most unfortunate. With the view of frightening him, she told him that he was threatened with still greater misfortunes, but observed that it would be easy to foresee and counteract these events, by means of consultations.

“ Madam,” answered the marquis, “ there is but one thing upon earth that I dread—it is the dishonour of the woman whom I love. Have you no means of remedying the usual embarrassments of an accouchement?”

“ I know of none,” said the matron.

“ The young lady has managed to conceal her situation, and might lie in secretly.”

“ She has already endangered her life ; and I will not consent, for fear of accident, to have any hand in this matter.”

“ Is it not possible,” said the marquis, “ to have an accouchement without suffering?”

“ As to that, I know nothing about it. I would never think of any method which might thwart the designs of nature.”

“ You deceive me ; you do know such a method—you employed it upon a person whose name I could give you.”

“ Who has dared thus to traduce me in this way? In all my operations I am guided entirely by the decisions of the faculty. God forbid that I should be stoned by all the doctors in the country, or driven, perhaps, out of France.”

"Will you leave me, then, to despair? If I were capable of making a bad use of your secrets, I might do so already, for I know them. In heaven's name, do not dissemble any longer, but tell me how it is possible to prevent the pains of delivery? Do you wish more money? Here it is."

He laid some pieces of gold upon the table.

"Stay," said the matron, "there is indeed a method, of which I am the discoverer, and which, although never tried upon any one, I believe to be effectual."

"But if you have never yet used it, may it not be dangerous and hazard the life of the woman I love?"

"When I say never, I am wrong; I have used it once, and with complete success. Be calm."

"Ah!" cried the marquis, "I shall ever be grateful to you! But," continued he, "might it not be possible to prevent the accouchement altogether, and to cause the immediate disappearance of every symptom?"

"Sir, it is a great crime that you are talking of."

"Alas!" answered the marquis, as if speaking to himself in a paroxysm of grief, "I would rather deprive myself of a child, the pledge of our love, than introduce into the world an unfortunate being, who most likely would be its mother's destroyer."

"For the love of God, sir, speak no more of it; it is a horrible sin even to think of such a thing!"

"What! then, is it better to be the means of destroying two persons, and throwing, perhaps, a whole family into despair? Oh! madam, I implore you to save us from this misery!"

The marquis hid his face in his hands, and sobbed as though he were weeping violently.

"Your despair has moved me deeply," said the matron; "but consider that for a woman like me to be engaged in such a thing is as much as my life is worth!"

"Why do you talk of your life? Are not *our* secret, and our safety, our honour involved? Nothing could reach you till after the death and dishonour of all I hold dear in the world."

"In that case, perhaps, I can; but it will be necessary to forearm me against the annoyances of the law, and to insure me, if necessary, an easy escape from the kingdom."

"Let not that trouble you; take my fortune—take my life!" And he threw the whole purse on the table.

"In that case, and solely to save you from the great danger in which I see you are, I consent to provide you with a beverage, and some instructions, which will immediately deliver the lady from her burden. It will be necessary to use the strictest precautions, and that she study exactly the directions which I am about to give you. My God! nothing but the desperate emergency in which you are placed could induce me to—— stay!"

She took a flask from a cupboard, and continued:

"Here is a liquor which has never yet failed in effect."

"Ah, madam, you will save our honour, which is dearer to us than our lives! But this is not sufficient; tell me how and in what quantities this liquor must be administered."

"On the first day," replied the midwife, "the patient must take one spoonful; on the second, two; on the third——"

"I shall never remember all that: write me this prescription, I beg you, in my pocket-book."

The midwife hesitated a moment, but, as the pocket-book was opened, a bank-note for five hundred francs fell to the ground; the marquis picked it up and presented it to her.

"Take it," said he, "it is not worth the trouble of putting back."

This last gift was so magnificent, that any suspicions which yet remained in the mind of the midwife were removed, and she wrote the prescription in the marquis's pocket-book.

The marquis put the flask in his pocket, took the pocket-book from her hand, examined it to see if the instructions were complete, and then turned to the midwife with a diabolical smile.

"At last," cried he, "I have you!"

"What mean you, sir?" inquired the astonished woman.

"I mean," continued the marquis, "that you are an infamous witch, and a vile poisoner. I mean that I have here the proof of your guilt, and that you will either do what I command you, or perish at the stake."

"Mercy! mercy!" cried the woman, falling at his feet.

"My mercy rests with yourself," calmly replied the marquis.

"Speak! what must I do?" inquired the midwife: "I am prepared for every thing."

"Listen, then; it is now my turn to tell my secrets—but I shall be careful not to write them."

"Say on, sir; you shall have no reason to complain of my devotion."

"Sit down, then, and hear what I have to say."

The woman rose from her knees, and threw herself into a chair.

"So, then, I see that you understand me," said the marquis. "The prison, the torture, and the stake, or three times as much gold as I have already given you;—in short, your destruction or prosperity for the rest of your life."

The midwife's eyes recovered their brightness, and she bent her head, as if to signify that she was his, body and soul.

"There is," continued the marquis, fixing his piercing look upon the poor woman,—"there is, in a chateau about three leagues from hence, a lady of quality, now some months gone with child. The birth of this child is hateful to me. You will have the charge of the accouchement. I will tell you what you must do, and you will do whatever I tell you. It is necessary to set out this very night. You will accompany me. I have horses waiting within a short distance of this house, and I will leave you at a place where you will wait my orders. You shall be informed when the time of your service arrives, and in the meantime shall want for no comfort that money can procure."

"I am ready," answered the midwife, briefly.

"You will obey me in every thing?"

"I will."

"Let us go, then."

She asked only for time to pack up a few necessaries; put some things in order, locked her doors, and quitted the house with the marquis. A quarter of an hour afterwards they were galloping along, in the middle of the night, without her knowing where the marquis was taking her.

The marquis returned to the chateau three days afterwards, and found the count's family as he had left them; that is to say, in the utmost excitement of hope and impatience for the delivery of the countess. He apologised for his sudden departure, alleging the importance of the business which occasioned it. While speaking of his journey, at dinner, he related the sensation which had been caused in the place from which he had returned, by a surprising event, of which he had almost been an eye-witness. A lady of quality was suddenly taken with the pains of labour. All the skill of the doctors was at fault; the lady was about to perish; when at last, in despair, they ordered a woman, who was much thought of in the country among the peasants, but who was little known among the higher orders, to be sent for. This woman presented herself modestly before them, mistrustful of herself. From her first remedies the pains ceased, as if by magic, and in a few hours the mother was happily delivered of a most beautiful child; but, immediately upon its birth, she was seized with a violent fever, which almost brought her to the grave. It was then resolved to call in physicians, in opposition to the wish of the master of the house, who placed great confidence in the woman. Their treatment only increased the fever. Recourse was again had to the midwife, and in three weeks the lady was miraculously restored to health. "This occurrence," continued the marquis, "has confirmed the woman's reputation so completely, that nothing is now spoken of in the town and its neighbourhood but her wonderful ability."

This story called to the minds of the company the condition of the countess. Her mother-in-law remarked, that they were too apt wrongfully to despise these humble country practitioners, and that perhaps experience and sound sense discovered secrets to them, which study and pride denied to the members of the faculty. The count agreed in this remark, and exclaimed that he would seek a midwife who should resemble the woman of whom they spoke. After this the subject was dropped, the marquis being the first to change the conversation; he was satisfied with having thus, without apparent design, sown the first seeds of his project.

After dinner the company walked upon the terrace. The count's mother, not being able to walk, owing to her great age, sat down on a bench, with the countess and Madame de Bouillé. The count and M. de Saint-Maixent continued walking together for a long time. The marquis naturally inquired whether all had gone on well, and if Madame de Saint-Geran had had any increase of indisposition during his absence; for her approaching accouchement had become the most engrossing subject in the family. By this inquiry the conversation returned to its former channel.

"A-propos," said the count, "you talked, very opportunely, of a skilful midwife; would it not be possible to have her here?"

"I certainly think," answered the marquis, "that you could not choose better, and that in this neighbourhood there are none who can compare with her."

"I have a great mind to send for her immediately, and to retain her, from this time, in the service of the countess, by having her here before her assistance is required. She would the better understand the countess's constitution. Do you know where she is to be found?"

"Let me see," said the marquis; "she lives in some village, but I cannot remember where it is."

"Do you recollect her name?"

"Hardly; Louise Boyard, I think, or Polliard; I do not know which."

"How! have you not even retained the name in your memory?"

"I heard the story, and that is all. Who the devil can remember a name which passes in at one ear and out at the other?"

"What! Had you, then, no thought of the countess?"

"It is so far from hence; I never imagined you would wish to engage this woman. I thought you were already provided."

"How can she be discovered?"

"Easily enough; I have a servant who knows every corner of the country, who will not fail in discovering her; if you wish it, I will send him in search of the woman."

"If I wish it, do you ask? Certainly, this moment!"

The same evening the servant received his commission, the instructions of the count, and, above all, those of his master, and set off. Of course he had not far to go in search of his object, but he remained purposely away for three days, at the end of which time Louise Goillard was installed in the chateau.

She was a woman of a plain and simple appearance, and quickly gained the confidence of every body. The machinations of the marquis and of Madame de Bouillé seemed now to be in the way of success, when an accident occurred, which had almost rendered them useless, and which, by nearly causing a great misfortune, would have had the effect of averting a great crime.

The countess, in going to her apartment, entangled her foot in a carpet, and fell heavily upon the floor. Alarmed by the cries of a servant, who had witnessed the accident, the whole household assembled. The countess was carried to bed, and all was dismay and terror. This accident, however, had no bad consequences, and only occasioned new visits from the neighbours, to prove once more their interest in her welfare. This took place towards the end of the seventh month.

At last the time of the countess's confinement approached. Every thing had long since been prepared for the expected birth. The marquis had employed the interval in dissipating the scruples of Madame de Bouillé. He saw, too, Louise Goillard several times privately, and gave her instructions; but he knew, moreover, that the corruption of the steward Baulieu was necessary to his plans. Baulieu was already wavering from the presents he had received; a large sum of money, and larger promises, did the rest. The marchioness, in the mean time, by the instigation of M. de Saint-Maixent, was labouring to induce her maids, the sisters Quinet, to give their assistance to the abominable project. Thus this excellent family were entirely surrounded by plots and conspiracies, carried on by those whom they most loved and trusted. The conspirators, thus prepared, impatiently waited their time.

On the 16th of August, 1641, the Countess of Saint-Geran was taken with the pains of labour, in the chapel of the chateau, where she had been attending mass. She was carried to her room before its conclusion. The pains continued with the most frightful paroxysms. The count, in tears, listened to the agonised cries of his wife. Many persons were spectators of the scene. The two daughters of the marechal's widow by her second marriage, one of whom, aged sixteen, was afterwards married to the Duc de Ventadour, and appeared at the trial, had wished to be present on an occasion of such deep interest to this noble family. Besides these, there were Madame de Saligny, sister of the deceased Marshal de Saint-Geran, the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, and the Marchioness de Bouillé.

As it became evident that the pains increased without result, that the case was most dangerous, and that the countess was in a precarious state, expresses were sent to the neighbouring parish churches, to offer up prayers for the mother and child. At Moulins the holy sacrament was exposed in the churches.

The midwife alone attended the countess in her labour. She had pretended that, from this arrangement, she would be more at ease; her slightest wish was eagerly obeyed. The countess did not speak a word, and only interrupted the dismal silence by the most heart-rending cries. Suddenly Madame de Bouillé, who pretended to be busily occupied, remarked, that the large company present disturbed the countess, and taking upon herself an air of authority, authorized by seeming tenderness, she requested that every one should retire from the patient's bedside, excepting those who were absolutely necessary for her attendance, and, that no one might imagine themselves excepted, she trusted that the count's mother would set the example. The count was thus drawn away from the melancholy scene, and every one followed the old lady from the sick-room. Even the countess's two waiting-maids were not permitted to remain, but were provided with employment elsewhere. It was represented as a cause for their removal, that two young girls, the eldest hardly fifteen, ought not to be present on such an occasion. The only persons that remained, therefore, were the Marchioness de Bouillé, the midwife, and the two sisters Quinet; and the poor countess was thus left in the hands of her most deadly enemies.

It was seven o'clock in the evening; the pains continued unabated. The count and his mother sent every minute for the latest intelligence, to which the answer, that all was well, and that in a short time their hopes would be fulfilled, was invariably returned; but the entrance to the chamber was forbidden to all the domestics.

Three hours later, the midwife declared, that the countess could not hold out without procuring some repose. She made her swallow a liquid, which she poured into her mouth by spoonfuls. Immediately afterwards the countess fell into so deep a sleep, that she appeared as if dead. The youngest of the Quinets, believing they were about to murder her, began to cry in a corner of the room, but Madame de Bouillé brought her to reason.

During this fearful night, a shadowy figure glided through the corridors, silently crossed the saloons, came as far as the door of the sick room, and spoke in low tones to the midwife and the marchioness. It was the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, who gave his orders, encouraged his people, watched every point of his plot, and was all the while a prey to those pangs which must accompany the perpetration of a great crime.

Owing to her great age, the count's mother was persuaded to take some repose. The count sat up, exhausted with fatigue, in a room within a few steps from the place where a set of fiends were working the ruin of all he held most dear.

The countess, while in this state of lethargy, was, unconsciously to herself, delivered of a boy, who thus fell, upon entering the world, into the hands of his enemies, without his mother ever having the means of defending him, by cries or tears. The door was opened, and a man, who had been waiting, entered the room; it was the steward Baulieu. The midwife, under pretence of paying the first attentions to the child, had turned aside with it into a corner. Baulieu observed one of her movements, and throwing himself upon her, held her hand. The wretched woman attempted to force her fingers into its skull. He snatched the poor infant from her arms; but, all his life, the count's son bore the marks of her violence. The Marchioness de Bouillé, perhaps, had not been able to resolve upon permitting her to commit so great a crime, but we think it more likely that the steward prevented it by the orders of M. de Saint-Maixent. The probability is that the marquis, doubting the fulfilment of the promise which Madame de Bouillé had made to marry him after the death of her husband, wished to preserve this child, as a means of compelling her to keep her word, by his having the power of threatening her with its production in the event of her proving false to him. At least, there are no other apparent reasons for a man of his character taking so much care of his victim.

Baulieu having snatched the child, put it into a basket, hid it under his cloak, and went in search of the marquis with his prey. They consulted together for some time, after which the steward went out by a side gate, which opened upon the moat of the chateau; from thence he crossed a terrace, and over a bridge, which led into the park. This park had twelve gates, to all of which he had the keys. He mounted a good horse, which he had in readiness hidden behind a wall, and went off at full gallop.

The same day he passed through the village of Escherolles, about a league from Saint-Geran, where he stopped at the house of a nurse, a woman of the name of Claude, by trade a glover, who suckled the child; but the steward, not daring to prolong his stay in a village so near Saint-Geran, crossed the river Allier at the Port de la Chaise; and having once more dismounted at the house of one Boucaud, where the mistress of the house again gave the child its nourishment, he pursued his way towards Auvergne.

The weather was excessively hot, the horse was worn out, and the child seemed uneasy. A carrier happened to pass, who was on his way to Riom. This man's name was Paul Boithion; he was the ordinary carrier on this road. Baulieu made a bargain with him, to convey the child in his cart, into which he himself mounted, holding it in his arms. The horse followed, tied up behind.

In the conversation which he had with this man, Baulieu began to inform him, that he should not take so much care of the child, if he did not belong to the first family in the Bourbonnais. He arrived about noon at the village of Ché. The mistress of the house where they stopped, who had nurslings of her own, consented to give a little of her milk to the poor infant, who was covered with blood; she warmed some water, washed its head and feet, and dressed it properly.

The carrier took them with him as far as Riom. Arrived there, Baulieu got rid of him, and making a false appointment with him, turned his horse's head in the direction of the abbey de Lavoine, and arrived at the village of Descoutaux, in the mountains between Lavoine and Thiers. In that place the Marchioness de Bouillé had a chateau, to which she was in the habit of retiring from time to time. At Descoutaux the child was nursed by a woman of the name of Gabrielle Moinot, who, it was arranged, was to receive her payment a month in advance; however, it remained under her charge only seven or eight days, owing to her being refused the name of the father or mother, or any place to which she might address herself, to give intelligence of her foster-child. This woman having spread this story about, no other nurse could be found to take charge of the infant. It was, therefore, removed from the village of Descoutaux. The persons who carried it away took the road to Burgundy; and, as they passed through a country covered with wood, all further traces of them were lost.

These details were afterwards proved by the nurses, the carrier, and other persons, who were witnesses at the trial. We relate them so minutely, because they were of great importance in the evidence. In the accounts of this case, from which we have gathered our facts, it has not been told how the steward's absence was accounted for at the chateau; but the marquis, doubtless, was provided with a sufficient pretext.

The lethargy of the countess continued until daybreak. She woke very weak, but in a state of comfort, which convinced her she was eased of her burden. Her first words were of her child. She wished to see and to embrace him, and inquired where he was? The midwife answered her with the greatest coolness, so much so, that the maids, who were there, were compelled to turn away, astounded at her effrontery, that no accouchement had taken place. The countess asserted the contrary, and as she appeared greatly excited, the midwife, to calm her, assured her that the delivery would not be much longer delayed, and that, to judge from the symptoms which had taken place during the night, she would most likely have a boy. This promise comforted the count and his mother, but failed in convincing the countess, who declared positively that her child was already born.

The same morning a servant maid met a female descending to the brink of the moat of the chateau, carrying a parcel in her arms. She recognised the midwife, and inquired of her what she was carrying, and where she was going so early? She answered, that the girl was very curious, and that it contained nothing of consequence; but pretending to be angry with this reply, the girl opened one of the ends of the parcel, before the midwife had time to prevent her, and discovered several cloths, all covered with blood.

"Madame has, then, been brought to bed?" said she to the midwife.

"No!" answered she hastily, "no such thing!"

"How can that be?" continued the servant, persisting, "since Madame de Bouillé, who was present, has said so."

"If she has said so," answered the midwife, quite confounded, "she has a very long tongue."

This girl's evidence was afterwards one of the principal causes of the conviction of the criminals.

The irritation of the countess increased next day. She insisted, with cries and tears, that they would at least tell her, what had become of her child, still asserting that she knew she was not mistaken in saying that she had been delivered. The midwife answered coldly, that "the new moon was unfavourable to child-birth, and that they would have to wait its waning,—a more propitious period."

The opinions of sick people are not generally received with great confidence; nevertheless, the firmness of the countess would have, sooner or later, convinced every one, had not the count's mother remembered that, on one occasion of her being enceinte, towards the end of the ninth month, she too had shown all the symptoms of immediate confinement, although it did not take place till six weeks afterwards.

This information restored some confidence. The marquis and Madame de Bouillé did all they could to make the family rest satisfied with it; but the countess continued to resist, and her continued transports of grief and agitation produced the utmost alarm.

The midwife, who no longer knew how to gain time, and was losing all hope, from the steadiness of Madame de Saint-Geran in her assertion, now resolved in her terror to destroy her. She persuaded the family that, in the peculiar situation of the countess, some violent exercise was necessary, and advised the countess to submit to it. The countess, still firm in her opinion, refused to concede to this advice; but the count, his mother, and the whole family, begged her so earnestly to agree to it, that she yielded.

She was placed in a close carriage, and once every day was carried out, over the roughest and most difficult roads. Thus was she shaken about, until she was quite breathless; and nothing but the very strong constitution which she possessed could have withstood this pain, in the delicate state of her health. She was carried back to her bed after this cruel drive; and seeing at last that no one would believe her assertions, she committed herself to Providence, and sought consolation in religion. Although the midwife had administered violent medicines under various pretences, still she withstood all these attempts on her life, and slowly recovered.

Time, which heals the greatest wounds, by degrees appeased those of the countess; although for some time her grief broke out afresh upon the least occasion, she finally overcame it, until it again revived by the events which we have still to relate.

There had been, previously to this, residing in Paris a fencing-master, who boasted that he belonged, through one of his brothers, to the service of a great family, and who was married to Marie Pigoreau, the daughter of a comedian. This man had died shortly before the commencement of our story, leaving his widow, in a state of indigence, with the charge of two children. The woman Pigoreau was of a very doubtful character, and no one knew how she lived, when all at once, after several short absences, and repeated visits from a stranger in the evenings, with his face muffled in his cloak, it was remarked that she lived in greater comfort, and wore better clothes, and at last it became known that she was bringing up a strange child.

About the same time it was said that she had deposited two thousand livres in the hands of a tradesman in the neighbourhood, named Raguenet; and some days after this, they having doubtless delayed the baptism of the child for fear that its origin should be traced, Pigoreau undertook to have it christened at Saint Jean-en-Grève. She had not recourse to the neighbours to bring him to the font, and found means to produce a father and mother at the church. She took as godfather the grave-digger of the parish, named Paul Marmion, who called the child by the name of Bernard.

Pigoreau remained in a confessional during the ceremony, and gave ten sous to this man. The godmother was Jeanne Chevalier, a poor woman of the parish.

On the parish registry the following was written:

"On the seventh day of March, sixteen hundred and forty-two, was baptized Bernard, the son of . . . . . . and of . . . . . . Paul Marmion, labourer and gravedigger of this parish, the godfather, and Jeanne Chevalier, widow of Pierre Thibou, the godmother."

A few days afterwards Pigoreau put the child to nurse with an acquaintance of hers, residing in the village of Torey en Brie, and whose husband was called Paillard. She told her it was a child of quality, who had been confided to her care, and that she would not hesitate, if he died, to redeem his life by the life of one of her own children. This nurse did not keep the infant long, as she fell sick; and Pigoreau placed the child with the widow of a peasant called Marc Peguin, who lived in the same village. The nurse's allowance was regularly paid in advance, and the infant treated in every way like a child of quality. Here also Pigoreau informed them of its noble birth, and that sooner or later it would make the fortune of those who had any thing to do with it. The child was often visited by a middle-aged man, who was believed to be the father, but who Pigoreau assured them was only her brother-in-law.

When the child was eighteen months old, Pigoreau again took it under her charge and weaned it. This woman had had two sons by her husband; the first was called Antoine; the second, who had he lived would have been named Henri, was born on the 9th of August, 1639, a short time after the death of his father, who had been killed in the month of June in the same year. Pigoreau determined to give to the stranger child the name and station of her own son, and thus to bury for ever in obscurity the secret of its birth. With this object she quitted the quarter where she had been residing, and took up her abode in a parish where she was unknown.

The child was brought up in this manner under the name of Henri, the second son of Pigoreau, until he attained the age of two years and a half; but at this period, whether it be that her engagement to keep him extended only up to this time, or that she had spent the two thousand livres, and further remuneration was refused her for its maintenance; at any rate she resolved to rid herself of her charge.

This woman had been heard to say that she had little anxiety about her eldest son, because she was quite certain as to the prospects of the second; and, when some one said to her, that, being obliged to part with one of her children, she had better keep the second, who was a very fine child, she answered that that did not depend on her, as this child's godfather was an uncle in easy circumstances, who would take charge of him. She often talked about this uncle, her brother-in-law, who, she said, was steward in a great family. One morning the porter of the hotel of Saint-Geran came to tell Baulieu, that a woman, carrying a child, wished to see him at the gate: Baulieu, we must here explain, was the brother of the deceased fencing-master, and the father-in-law of Pigoreau's second son. It will therefore be guessed who the stranger had been, who had given her the charge of the child of quality, and had been to visit him to the nurse's house. Pigoreau earnestly represented the hardships of her situation. The steward, much moved, took the child, and told Pigoreau to wait for him at a place which he pointed out at a short distance from the house.

Baulieu's wife exclaimed loudly against this increase to her family; but he succeeded in calming her, by representing to her the poverty of his sister-in-law, and the ease with which, in a house like that of the count, they might relieve her of the burden. He then went in search of his master, to request permission to bring up the child in the house. The count and countess were at first opposed to the proposal, remarking that as he already had five children, it would be imprudent in him to take upon himself this new burden, but he continued to implore them to allow it with so much earnestness, that they finally consented to the plan. The countess wished to see the child, and as she was about to start for Moulins, she ordered him to be placed in the carriage with her women; when he was shown to her, she exclaimed involuntarily "What a lovely child!"

He was indeed a beautiful boy, with fair hair, large blue eyes, and regular features. She caressed him a hundred times, and the child returned her caresses in an engaging manner.

When they arrived at the Chateau de Saint-Geran, her tenderness for Henri (which name the child still retained) increased. She would often gaze upon him with sadness, and then embracing him tenderly, would hold him for a long time to her breast. The count shared her feelings for the pretended nephew of Baulieu, and he became in a manner adopted as their son, and educated as a child of quality.

The Marquis de Saint-Maixent and Madame de Bouillé were not married, although the old Marquis de Bouillé had been long since dead. It seemed as though this project had been given up. The marchioness was doubtless restrained by her scruples, while the marquis was indisposed to it by his dissolute habits.

It is believed that other engagements and enormous sums of money indemnified him for this broken promise.

The Marquis de Maixent had seduced a girl of the name of Jacqueline de la Garde. This girl often heard him boast, as a clever intrigue, of having carried off the son of a governor of a province, and grandchild of a marshal of France ; and speaking of the Marchioness de Bouillé, he had been heard to say, that it was he who had made her wealthy, and that to him she owed her whole opulence. On one occasion, having taken Jacqueline to a beautiful spot, upon grounds belonging to himself, she admired its situation, remarking "*Que c'était un beau lieu:*" he replied, laughingly, with a play upon words, "*Qu'il connaissait un autre Baulieu, qui lui avait procuré le moyen de faire une fortune de cinq cent mille écus.*"

In a journey to Paris along with Jadelon sieur de la Barbesange, the marquis allowed to escape from him that the Countess de Saint-Geran had been delivered of a son, who was then in his power.

The marquis had not seen Madame de Bouillé for a long time ; their common danger once more brought them together. They had both learnt with terror the presence of Henri at the Hotel de Saint-Geran. They consulted together upon the subject, and the marquis undertook to make matters safe. However, he dared not undertake any thing rashly against the child, and what rendered it the more difficult, that, owing to some of his adventures having come to the ears of the St. Gerans, he was now upon very cold terms with the family.

Baulieu, the constant witness of the tenderness of the count and countess for little Henri, was a hundred times on the point of confessing all to them. He was torn with remorse. He frequently let fall words which he believed, from the length of time which had elapsed, would not have been noticed, but which were, nevertheless, observed. He sometimes remarked that he held in his hands the life and honour of Madame de Bouillé, and that the count and countess had more reasons than they knew of for loving Henri. One day he laid before a clergyman the following question of conscience:—If a man, who has assisted in the abduction of a child, has done enough, to satisfy his conscience, by restoring it to its father and mother, without their knowing who it is? The answer of the priest is not known, but to all appearance the steward was by no means reassured by it. Upon being congratulated by an inhabitant of Moulins on having a nephew who received such kind treatment from his master and mistress, he replied, that they might well love the child, for that it was very closely allied to them.

These expressions were remembered by other persons than those who had the deepest interest in them. One day a dealer in foreign wines came to offer for sale to Baulieu some Spanish wine, and gave him a flask to taste as a sample. The same evening he was taken horribly ill. He was carried to his bed, where he lay writhing and uttering the most fearful cries. When his sufferings left him any reason, one single thought governed him, and in his agony he kept repeating that he wished to ask pardon of the count and countess for a great loss which he had caused them. The persons who surrounded his bedside replied, that this was of little importance, and that he ought not to sadden his last moments with such reflections, but he continued to cry so piteously for them to come to him, that some one went to inform them of his wish. The count, believing it related to some trifling loss, some small amount of money embezzled from the expenses of the house, and fearing to hasten the death of the unfortunate man by shame and the avowal of a fault, sent back word that he forgave him, that he might die tranquilly, and declined coming to see him. Baulieu expired shortly after, carrying his secret with him to the grave. This was in 1648.

The child was now seven years old, and the count and countess felt their love for him increasing with his growth; they had him taught dancing and fencing, clothed him in the dress of a page, and were served by him in that capacity. It was against him that the marquis now turned his machinations. He was scheming no doubt, in his mind, a plot no less criminal than the preceding, when justice at last reached him by means of other enormous crimes, of which he was accused. He was arrested one day, in the street, while talking to a servant of the Saint-Geran family, and was taken to the prison of the Conciergerie. Whether owing to his imprudent observations, or to the other indications which we have related, reports began to be current in the Bourbonnais of the true state of this case; these confused rumours at length reached the ears of the count and countess, but they only served to renew their grief, without offering any proof of the truth.

In the mean time, the count went to take the waters at Vichy, accompanied by the countess and Madame de Bouillé. Chance ordained that in this town they should meet with Louise Goillard the midwife. This woman renewed her acquaintance with the family, and paid frequent visits to the marchioness de Bouillé. One day, the countess coming suddenly into the apartment of the marchioness, found them conversing together in a low voice. Upon her entrance they immediately ceased, and appeared disconcerted.

The countess, although she saw their agitation, attached no importance to it, but inquired the subject of their conversation.

"Oh! nothing," answered the marchioness.

"If it is nothing, tell me what it is," said the countess, observing that they had both coloured.

The marchioness, in her confusion, could not find an answer, and felt her agitation increasing.

"Louise Goillard," said she at length, "was praising my brother for having received her so kindly."

"And why," said the countess, turning to the midwife, "should Louise Goillard have apprehended an unkind reception from my husband?"

"I feared," said the midwife, adroitly, "that he could not but entertain a bad feeling towards me after what passed, when we believed you to be about to have a child."

The mystery of these words, and the agitation of the two women, instantly struck the countess with suspicion; she restrained herself however, and did not carry the conversation further. Nevertherless, her emotion did not escape the eyes of the marchioness. The next day she retired to her estate at Lavoine; this imprudent step, of course, only strengthening the suspicions of the countess.

The first resolution of the countess was to have Louise Goillard arrested, but she felt that, in an affair of such importance, nothing should be done without careful consideration. She consulted her husband and his mother, and it was determined to send for the midwife, and, without allowing her to suspect any thing, suddenly to question her upon the subject. She hesitated and contradicted herself several times, besides which her excessive fright was alone a sufficient proof of her guilt. She was placed in the hands of justice, and the Count de Saint-Geran made his charge against her before the vice-seneschal of Moulins.

The midwife, upon undergoing a first interrogation, confessed the fact of the accouchement having taken place, but averred that the child was stillborn, and had been buried under a stone, near a staircase, which led up to a barn, in the courtyard.

The judge, accompanied by a physician and a surgeon, searched the place which she had mentioned, but found neither stone, skeleton, nor any other indication of her story being true; they sought also in vain in every other place where there was the least probability of discovering any clue to the affair.

Upon this being told to the count's mother, she said that proceedings against this infamous woman ought to be immediately commenced. The preliminary procedure accordingly took place before the Lieutenant Criminel.

Louise Goillard, in a second interrogation, averred, that the countess had not been delivered at all; in a third, that she had had a miscarriage; in a fourth, that she had given birth to a boy, whom Baulieu had carried off in a basket; in a fifth, on which occasion she answered from the *sellette*,* she asserted, that the avowal of the accouchement of the countess had been drawn from her by violence.

In all her declarations she laid nothing to the charge of Madame de Bouillé, or the Marquis de Saint-Maixent.

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* A stool on which prisoners were placed when examined under strong circumstances of suspicion.

As soon as she was imprisoned, she despatched her son, Guillemin, to the marchioness, to inform her merely that she had been arrested. The marchioness understood the threat, and was in great consternation. She immediately sent the Sieur de la Foresterie, her equerry, to the lieutenant general, who was her counsel, and the mortal enemy of the count, that she might have his assistance in this emergency, and be instructed by what means she might assist the midwife, without in any manner appearing herself. The advice of the lieutenant was, to stifle the proceedings, and to obtain a decree prohibiting the continuation of the suit. By a lavish expenditure of money, the marchioness obtained this decree, but almost immediately afterwards it became useless, and the prohibition was removed.

La Foresterie had instructions afterwards to proceed to Riom, where the sisters Quinet were now residing, and by a liberal use of money to induce them to persist in keeping the secret. The eldest of them, on leaving the service of the marchioness, to whose horrible secrets she was privy, had flourished her fists in her mistress's face, telling her, that she should one day repent having turned them away, as she would confess every thing, though she should be hanged for it. These girls now sent her word that they begged to return to her service; that the countess had made them advantageous proposals, if they would speak out; that they had even been questioned in her name, but that as yet they had told nothing, but only asked for time to consider their answer. The marchioness was compelled to take back these girls; she kept the younger, and married the other to Delisle, her steward.

La Foresterie, to whose ears (during these commissions with which he had been entrusted) some strange revelations had come, quitted the house disgusted with the service of such a mistress. The marchioness, on parting with him, addressed him in these words, "If you are indiscreet enough to reveal one word that you have heard from these girls, the Quinets, I shall punish you by the dagger of my steward Delisle." Having thus fortified her position, she believed herself safe from any attack, but it happened that a person of the name of Prudent Berger, gentleman and page of the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, who was in the confidence of his master, and had been to visit him at the Conciergerie, where he was imprisoned, threw some strange lights upon this affair. The marquis had told him the whole story of the accouchement of the countess, and the abduction of the child.

"I am astonished, sir," the page had answered, "that having so many troublesome affairs hanging over your head at present, you do not lighten your conscience of this one."

"It is my purpose," replied the marquis, "to give up this child to his father; I have been enjoined to do so by a priest, to whom I confessed having carried off the grandson of a marechal of France, and the son of the governor of a province."

The marquis was permitted to leave his prison from time to time, upon parole. This will not surprise those who know how strong a reliance was placed in those days upon the honour of a gentleman, even although he were the greatest criminal. The marquis, profiting by this privilege, took the page to see a beautiful child, about seven years old.

"Page," said he, "look well at this child, that you may recognise him when I send you to inquire about him."

He afterwards confessed to the page, that this was the son of the Count de Saint-Geran, whom he had told him of. These reports were spread at the time when other proceedings had commenced against the marquis, which left him no means of struggling against the discovery of his crimes; officers of justice were sent to the Conciergerie, but the gaolers stopped them on their entrance, and informed them that the marquis was ill, and engaged with a clergyman from whom he was receiving the sacrament. As they insisted upon admission, the officers of the prison led the way to his cell. They met the clergyman coming out, who called to them to send immediately for persons to whom the marquis had a secret to reveal; that he was in a desperate state, and had confessed that he had poisoned himself. The party entered the cell.

M. de Saint-Maixent was on his truckle bed, rolling about in agony, now howling like a wild beast, now talking wildly and incoherently.

"Monsieur le Comte—send for him—the Countess de Saint-Géran—why do they not come?"

The officers drew near, and urged him to explain himself.

The marquis fell into a swoon; when he again opened his eyes he went on as before.

"Send for the countess. I wish their forgiveness—I will tell them all!"

To induce him to speak, one of the officers said that the count was there. The marquis turned towards them, faintly muttering, "I will tell you——." But he suddenly stopped, uttered one fearful cry, and expired.

It now appeared as if fate had resolved to stop every tongue from which the truth might escape. Nevertheless, this death-bed avowal of a revelation to make to the Count de Saint-Geran, together with the deposition of the clergyman who attended the dying man, made a considerable addition in the evidence.

The court, collecting all the circumstances of the case which we have related, drew from them a body of proof which convinced every one of the truth. The carrier, the nurses, and the servants were brought forward; the various adventures of the child were traced, from the time of the accouchement until his arrival at the village of Descoutaux.

The judicial authorities, in tracing the origin of the crime, could not avoid criminating the Marchioness de Bouillé; but there is reason to believe that they were prevented from this by a great effort of the Count de Saint-Geran, who could not make up his mind to destroy his sister, whose dishonour would have been reflected upon himself. The marchioness brooded over her remorse in solitude, and never reappeared in society. She died some time afterwards, carrying to the grave the burden of her guilty secret.

The court of Moulins finally passed sentence upon the midwife, accused and convicted of having carried off and concealed the countess's child, by which she was condemned to be hanged, after being put to the torture. The woman appealed against the sentence, and was afterwards removed to the Conciergerie.

The proofs, thus successively brought forward by these proceedings, had already partially opened the eyes of the noble pair at Saint-Geran, and the affection, which nature had long since planted in their breasts, did the rest. They had now no remaining doubts that their page was no other than their son, and having made him throw off his menial dress, he was saluted by the titles due to his rank, and was called the Count de la Palice.

In the meantime a person, named Sequeville, informed the countess of an important discovery made by him: this was, that in the year 1642, a child had been baptized at Saint Jean-en-Grève, and that a woman of the name of Pigoreau had been the principal party in the ceremony. A thorough investigation was instituted upon this intelligence, and it was discovered that the child had been suckled in the village of Torcy.

The child when shown, in the presence of the court, to the nurses and the witnesses at Torcy, was instantly recognised by them, as well from the colour of his hair and eyes as from the mark of the midwife's fingers upon his head, which was still plainly visible. This indelible proof of the woman's crime became the principal evidence against her. The witnesses deposed that, upon the child being visited by Pigoreau, accompanied by a person who seemed to have the appearance of a man of quality, she frequently repeated that he was the son of a great nobleman, who had been confided to her care, and who, she trusted, would be the means of making, not only her fortune, but also the fortunes of all those who had assisted in bringing him up. The child's godfather, the gravedigger Paul Marmion, the grocer Raguenet, in whose hands the two thousand livres had been deposited, Pigoreau's servant, who had heard her say that the count was forced to take this child, and several witnesses who had heard her say that he was of too noble birth to wear the livery of a page, made altogether an unbroken chain of evidence; but this was not the whole. It was at Pigoreau's house that the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, accompanied by his page, had visited the child, who, residing at the hotel de Saint-Geran, frequently went to see her as his mother. Prudent Berger, the marquis's page, instantly recognised the woman Pigoreau, and also identified the child as being the same he had seen at her house, and whose story the marquis had told him. These and other circumstances which transpired rendered it necessary to extend the accusation. A summons was issued against Pigoreau, who had not been involved in the previous proceedings.

The widow of the Duke de Ventadour, daughter of the wife of the deceased Marshal de Saint-Geran by her second marriage, and sister of the count on the father's side, together with the Countess of Lude, daughter of the Marchioness de Bouillé, from whom the young count would carry off the rich succession of M. de Saint-Geran, took great interest in this proceeding, and spoke of entering the lists against him. Pigoreau sought them out, and concerted joint measures with them. Then began that celebrated trial which long engrossed the attention of all France; a similar trial to the case decided by Solomon, of a child claimed by two mothers.

The Count de Saint-Geran's adversaries in this cause were Pigoreau and the ladies du Lude and de Ventadour. These ladies, doubtless, were sincere in disbelieving the existence of the crime; for if they had been aware of the truth, it is to be presumed they would not have been capable of holding out so long and so obstinately. The midwife had fallen sick in prison; but they made common cause with her, and it was resolved that the parties accused should appeal against the criminal proceedings: that Pigoreau should petition against the judgment ordering her personal appearance and confrontation with the witnesses: and lastly, in order to create a greater diversion in their favour, that Pigoreau should oppose the maternity of the countess, by reclaiming the child as her own; and that the ladies should maintain that the accouchement of the countess was a mere fabrication, which had been arranged in order that she might adopt another child as her own. To put on a greater appearance of disinterestedness, the two ladies pretended that they had not had any previous understanding with Pigoreau.

At this juncture, the midwife died in prison of a disease, aggravated by grief and remorse. After her death, her son Guillemin confessed that she had often told him that the countess had been delivered of a son, whom Baulieu had carried off, and that the child, of whom Baulieu had undertaken the charge at the hotel de Saint-Geran, was the same who had been formerly carried off by him; this young man added, that he had concealed this truth as long as it could prove injurious to his mother, and further, that the ladies de Ventadour and du Lude had assisted her in prison with their money and advice.

The petition of the parties accused, and the intervention of the ladies, were discussed in seven sittings of the three chambers united. The trial crept on with all the slowness and impediments of those times. After long and specious pleadings on both sides, Bignon, the advocate-general, took the side of the count and countess de Saint-Geran; and by a judgment of the court of la Tournelle, on the 18th of August, 1657, the appeals of the ladies and the accused parties were dismissed, with fines and costs, and Pigoreau was prohibited from quitting the town and suburbs of Paris, on pain of conviction.

The ladies du Lude and de Ventadour, and their party, were at first much cast down by this reverse of fortune, but they soon renewed the attack with greater vigour than ever. These ladies, who, in all the examinations, had taken Pigoreau with them in their carriage, suggested to her, as a means of keeping back the sentence, that she should present a new petition, demanding that the witnesses of the alleged pregnancy might be confronted with her. The court upon the 28 August, 1658, issued an order to that effect, but with the condition, that Pigoreau should within three days surrender herself a prisoner in the Conciergerie.

This proceeding, of which Pigoreau dreaded the consequences, terrified her to such a degree, that, after having weighed in her mind the profit she might derive from the trial, which would be lost to her by flight, against the danger in which she was placing her own life, by thus venturing into the hands of the law, she gave up her cause, and secretly fled for refuge abroad. This last circumstance seemed sufficient to discourage the two ladies from any further resistance, but they were not yet at the end of their resources, or their obstinacy.

Pigoreau having been outlawed, and the proceedings against the other accused parties ripe for judgment, the Count de Saint-Geran set off for the Bourbonnais, in order to carry into effect the decree ordering the confrontation of witnesses.

He had scarcely arrived in the province, when he was obliged to interrupt his labours, to receive the king and the queen mother, who passed through Moulins in returning from Lyons. He presented the young Count de la Palice to their majesties as his son, and they received him as such; but during the visit of the king and queen, the Count de Saint-Geran was taken ill, probably exhausted by the zeal which he had shown, in the midst of his own affairs, to give their majesties a proper reception. During his illness, which only lasted a week, he made his will, in which he renewed his recognition of his son; named, as his executors, M. de la Barriere, intendant of the province, and the Sieur Vialet, treasurer of France, and committed to their care the termination of the cause.

His last words were of his wife and child, his only regret being that he left their cause unsettled. He died on the 31st of January, 1659.

The two ladies de Ventadour and du Lude obtained letters of administration, as heiresses of the Count de Saint-Geran. They appealed at the same time from the sentence of the lieutenant-general of the province, which intrusted the tutelage of the young count to his mother, the countess, and his guardianship to the Sieur de Bompré. The countess, on the other hand, appealed against the confirmation of the letters of administration, and did every thing in her power to bring back the contest to the Court of the Tournelle. The ladies carried their appeal into the supreme court, maintaining that they were not parties to the proceedings in the Tournelle.

We shall not carry our readers further into the labyrinth of the proceedings which followed, or give a recital of the stratagems and counter-stratagems which the spirit of litigation suggested to the contending parties. The countess, at the end of three years, obtained, upon the 9th of April, 1661, a decree, by which the king in person referred the whole proceedings to the court composed of the three chambers united.

The countess was now once more upon her former field of battle. The advocates and attorneys on both sides exhausted their skill and resources, and displayed their legal tactics in mountains of voluminous pleadings, which are still extant. After a new course of procedure, apparently interminable, and pleadings longer and more complicated than ever, a final judgment was at length pronounced, fully recognizing the rights of the young count, as the Count de Saint-Geran's legitimate son, and dismissing, with costs, the claims of the ladies de Ventadour and du Lude. Pigoreau at the same time was condemned to be hanged, if apprehended; if not, to be hanged in effigy in the Place de Grève.

Never, perhaps, was there a cause more obstinately contested on both sides, especially the side by which it was lost. As to the countess, she took it so deeply to heart, that she often told the judges, while canvassing them (in the fashion of the time), that if they refused to recognise her son, she would marry him, and endow him with all her property.

The young Count de la Palice, who, by his father's death, became Count de Saint-Geran, married, in 1667, Claude Françoise Madeleine de Varignies, only daughter of François de Manfreville, and of Marguerite Jourdain de Canisi. He had only one daughter, who took the veil; and his death, at the age of fifty-five, was the extinction of this noble family.

JOAN OF NAPLES.

1343—1382.

CHAPTER I.

On the night of the 15th or 16th of January, in the year 1343, the inhabitants of Naples were startled from their peaceful slumbers by the tolling of the bells in the three hundred churches of that splendid capital. In the general agitation caused by this unusual alarm, the first idea that entered the minds of the people was, that the town was on fire, or that a hostile army had silently disembarked under cover of the night, and was about to put the citizens to the sword. But the doleful and intermittent sounds of the bells, which, breaking the silence of the night at regular intervals, invited the faithful to recite prayers for the dying, soon convinced them that no misfortune threatened the town, and that the king only was in danger.

In fact, for several days previously, the greatest anxiety had been observed to prevail within the Castel Nuovo. The officers of the crown were regularly assembled twice in the day; and the nobles of the kingdom, who had the privilege of entrance to the royal apartments, seemed oppressed with profound melancholy. Meanwhile, although the death of the king was looked on as inevitable, yet, when it became known that his last hour was approaching, the whole town was affected with the deepest grief; which will be the more readily understood when we explain that he, whose death was now so near, after a reign of thirty-three years, eight months, and a few days, was Robert of Anjou, the most just, wise, and glorious king that ever occupied the throne of Sicily. Truly did he bear with him to the grave the regret and the praises of all his subjects. The soldiers spoke with enthusiasm of the long wars which he had maintained against Frederic and Peter of Arragon, Henry VII., and Louis of Bavaria, and felt their hearts glow within them at the recollections of the brilliant campaigns of Lombardy and Tuscany; the priests extolled him, from gratitude at his having invariably defended the popes from the attacks of the Gibelins, and from his having founded convents, hospitals, and churches, in all parts of the kingdom; the men of letters looked upon him as the most accomplished king in christendom—so much so, indeed, that Petrarch would accept from no other hands than his the poet's crown, and for three successive days answered the questions which Robert deigned to propound to him, upon every branch of human knowledge. The jurists, amazed at the wisdom of the laws by which he had enriched the Neapolitan code, had surnamed him the Solomon of the middle ages; the nobles applauded him for the respect he paid to their privileges; and he had gained the hearts of the people by his clemency, his piety, and his mildness. And now, priests and soldiers, men of letters and poets, nobles and commoners, looked forward with terror to the government falling into the hands of a stranger and a young girl, and called to mind the words of Robert himself when following to the grave the body of Charles, his only son. At the moment when he passed the threshold of the church, he turned towards the barons of the kingdom, and cried, in a voice stifled by his sobs, "This day the crown is fallen from my head; wo to me! wo to you!" And now that the bells were announcing the dying agonies of the good king, these prophetic words occurred to the minds of every one. The women prayed fervently to God, and the men hastened from all parts of the town towards the royal residence, in order to hear the latest and best authenticated intelligence; but after some minutes of expectation, which they employed in communicating to each other their melancholy thoughts, they were compelled to return as they came, as nothing passing within was allowed to transpire. The drawbridge was raised as usual, and the guards were at their posts.

Nevertheless, if our readers have a wish to be present at the last agonies of the descendant of Saint Louis, and the grandson of Charles of Anjou, we can introduce them into the chamber occupied by the dying monarch. An alabaster lamp, suspended from the ceiling, lighted a spacious and gloomy room, the walls of which were hung with black velvet, embroidered with golden fleurs-de-lis. By the wall facing the two doors, which were at this time closed, stood, under a brocade canopy, an ebony bedstead supported by four columns, wrought and sculptured with symbolical figures. The king, after having struggled with the most violent convulsions, had fallen back exhausted into the arms of his confessor and physician, each of whom, holding a hand of the dying man, were feeling his pulse with great anxiety, and exchanging significant glances. At the foot of the bed sat a female (of about fifty years of age) with clasped hands, and eyes raised to heaven in the attitude of grief and resignation; this female was the queen. Her face had that appearance of patient suffering, which indicates a mind tried by adversity and subdued by religion. At the expiration of an hour, during which time no movement occurred to disturb the profound silence which reigned round the bed of death, the king sighed feebly, opened his eyes, and made a faint effort to raise his head. He begged the queen to draw near, and said in a broken voice, that he wished to converse with her a short time without witnesses. The physician and the priest retired, and the king followed them with his eyes till they disappeared, then passing his hand across his brow as if to collect his thoughts, and making an effort to gather his strength, he spoke thus: "What I have to say to you, madam, has no connexion with the two grave personages who were just now here, for their duty is fulfilled. The one has done for my body all that human skill could suggest, with no other result than that of prolonging my agonies; the other, by promising me the divine remission of my sins, without having the power to remove the gloomy apparitions which rise before me at this dreadful hour. You have twice seen me struggling under a supernatural pressure. My forehead is bathed with sweat, my limbs are stiffened, my cries have been stifled by an iron hand. Is it the evil spirit whom God allows to torment me, or is it but remorse, taking the form of a phantom? Already I feel that the two combats I have undergone have so weakened my strength, that I cannot bear up against a third. Listen to me then, my Sancia, while I give you some directions on which perhaps will depend the repose of my soul." "My liege and master," said the queen, in a tone of the calmest submission, "I am ready to receive your commands, and if God in the inscrutable designs of providence has ordained that you should be called to his glory, and we should be left to mourn for you, your last earthly wishes shall be executed with the most scrupulous exactness; but permit me first, to sprinkle some drops of holy water to drive away the curse from the room, and to read you a passage from the prayer you composed, in honour of your holy brother, to implore his protection at a moment when it is indispensable to us."

And opening a richly-bound volume, she recited with fervent devotion some verses of the prayer, written in elegant latin by Robert, for the use of his brother Louis, bishop of Toulouse, a prayer which continued to be employed in the church, to the period of the Council of Trent.

Soothed by the beauty of his own composition, the king had nearly forgotten the object of the conversation, which he had demanded with so much solemnity. He murmured softly: "Oh! yes! you are in the right; pray for me, madam, for you are indeed a saint, while I am but a wretched sinner."

"Do not say so, my lord," interrupted Donna Sancia, "are you not the greatest, the wisest, and the most virtuous king, who has ever sat upon the throne of Naples?"

"But that throne is usurped," replied Robert gloomily; "you know it properly belongs to Charles Martel, my eldest brother; and as Charles, by right of his mother, has inherited the throne of Hungary, the kingdom of Naples descends to his eldest son Carobert, and not to me, who am but the third in succession. I have permitted myself to be crowned in place of my nephew, who is the lawful king; I have substituted the younger for the elder branch of the family; for thirty-three years I have stifled the reproaches of my conscience. True, I have gained battles, made laws, and founded churches: but there is one word which gives the lie to all the pompous titles which the admiration of the people attach to my name, and that word sinks far deeper in my soul, than all the flatteries of my courtiers, the lays of the poets, or the shouts of the multitude: it is—that I am an usurper."

"Do not slander yourself, my liege; remember that if you have not abdicated in favour of the lawful heir, it was, that you wished to save the people from the greatest misfortunes. Besides which," continued the queen, "you have retained the government of the kingdom with the assent and authority of our holy father, the sovereign pontiff, who disposes of it as a fief belonging to the church."

"I have satisfied my conscience with these reasons for a long time," replied the dying man, "and the authority of the pope has silenced my scruples, but whatever security we may affect during life, there must come a solemn and terrible hour when all such illusions vanish; for me, this hour is come, and I must shortly appear before that God, who is the only infallible judge."

"If his justice is infallible," the queen replied, "is not his mercy infinite? Even supposing your terrors to be founded in truth, what sin would not be forgiven by so sincere a repentance? and have you not repaired the injury which you may have done to your nephew Carobert, by summoning Andrea his younger son into the kingdom, and by marrying him to Joan, the eldest daughter of your unfortunate Charles; will they not then be the heirs of your crown?"

"Alas!" cried Robert, with a deep sigh, "God will perhaps punish me for having too late remembered this just reparation. Oh! my good and noble Sancia, you have touched a chord, which vibrates sadly in my soul, and you yourself have led me to the subject of which I was about to speak. I have a dark presentiment (and the presentiments of the dying are generally prophetic), I say, I have a presentiment, that the two sons of my nephew Louis, who, since the death of his father, is king of Hungary, and Andrea, whom I have wished to place upon the throne of Naples, will be the destroyers of my family. From the first day he set foot in our palace, a strange fatality has opposed all my intentions; I had hoped, that in bringing up Joan and Andrea together, a tender intimacy would spring up between these two children, and that the beauty of our climate, our polished manners, and the elegant splendour of our court, would eventually soften down all the remaining rudeness in the character of the young Hungarian; but in spite of my efforts, every thing appears to have contributed to inspire the pair with aversion and coldness to each other. Joan, hardly fifteen years old, is already gifted far beyond her age. Endowed with a brilliant and active mind, a noble and elevated character, an ardent and lively imagination; she is, at times, as free and playful as an infant, and, at others, as dignified and haughty as a queen; now, as confiding and sprightly as a girl, and again as impassioned as a woman; offering the most striking contrast to Andrea, who, after having resided ten years in our court, is more rude, sullen, and untractable than ever. His cold and regular features, his inexpressive face, and his repugnance for all the pleasures which his wife most enjoys, have raised between Joan and him, a barrier of indifference and antipathy. To the kindest expressions, he answers by a dry word, a disdainful smile, or a frowning brow; and he never seems so happy as when, under pretext of hunting, he is enabled to leave the precincts of the court. Such, madam, are the young couple, upon whose heads my crown is about to descend, and who, in a few hours, will find themselves exposed to all the storms which now lurk beneath a deceitful calm, and which only await my last sigh, to burst forth upon their heads."

"My God! my God!" cried the queen, greatly agitated.

"Listen to me, Sancia; I know that your heart has ever been detached from earthly vanities, and that you await the hour when God shall summon me away, to retire into the convent of Santa Maria della Croce, of which you yourself are the founder, in the hope of there ending your days. Think not that at this moment, when, convinced of the nothingness of human grandeur, I am about to sink into the tomb, I shall endeavour to dissuade you from your holy resolution. Grant me only, before being wedded to our Lord, one year of widowhood, during which time you will keep a watchful eye upon Joan and her husband, and avert the dangers with which they are threatened. Be on your guard against all the intrigues and temptations which will surround the young queen; and, above all, beware of the affection of Bertrand d'Artois, the beauty of Louis de Tarento, and the ambition of Charles de Duras."

The king paused, exhausted by the effort which he had made in pronouncing these words; then, turning a supplicating look to his wife, and holding her attenuated hand in his, he proceeded in an almost inaudible voice.

"Once more, I implore you not to quit the court for the space of one year. Do you promise me this, madam?".

"My liege, I promise."

"And now," continued Robert, whose face brightened up at these words, recall my confessor and my physician, and assemble the family; for the hour approaches, and I feel that I shall not much longer have the power of uttering my last words."

In a few moments the priest and the physician re-entered the room. The king thanked them earnestly for the attentions they had paid him in his last sickness, and begged they would assist in clothing him in the coarse garb of the Franciscan monks, "that God," said he, "beholding me expire in poverty, humility, and penitence, may the more readily grant me pardon for my sins." Accordingly, they fastened upon his naked feet the sandals of the mendicant friars, clothed him in the frock of St. Francis, and tied the cord round his body. Thus, stretched upon his bed, with his thin white hairs, his long beard, and his hands crossed upon his breast, the king of Naples resembled one of those venerable anchorites whose lives are passed in macerations of their flesh; and whose souls, absorbed in the contemplation of celestial objects, insensibly pass out of the last struggle with death into eternal bliss. He remained in this attitude for some time, with closed eyes, in silent prayer to God; then, having ordered the spacious room in which he lay to be lit up, as on grand solemnities, he made a sign to the two persons present, one of whom placed himself at the head, and the other at the foot of the bed. At the same instant the folding doors were thrown open, and the whole of the royal family, preceded by the queen, and followed by the principal nobility of the kingdom, entered the room, and, silently ranging themselves around the bed, awaited the last words of the expiring monarch.

The king's eyes were fixed upon Joan, who had placed herself upon his right hand, with an indescribable expression of affection and sadness. She was of such rare and perfect beauty, that her grandfather looked on her as on an angel, whom God had sent to console him in his last agonies. Her beautifully marked features, her large and humid black eyes, her pure and open forehead, her hair as glossy as the raven's wing, her delicate mouth and noble form, made altogether such a creation of loveliness, that left upon the hearts of those who looked upon her a profound impression of calm and melancholy. Tall and slender, her movements were full of lightness and activity, giving to her shape the graceful undulation of the stalk of a flower waving in the breeze. But, notwithstanding all these fascinating graces, there might already be observed in the heiress of Robert a character of firmness and decision; and the dark circles which surrounded her beautiful eyes proved that her soul was already governed by precocious passions.

Next to Joan stood her young sister Maria, a girl of twelve or thirteen years of age, also the daughter of Charles, Duke of Calabria, who had died before she was born, and of Marie de Valois, who had the grief of leaving her in the cradle. Embarrassed by this august assemblage, she advanced timidly by the side of the grand seneschal Filippa, surnamed the Catanian, who was the governess of the princesses, and respected by them as a mother. Behind these princesses, and by the side of Filippa, stood Robert de Cabane, a noble looking young man, standing with an air of haughty carelessness, and stealthily glancing at Joan looks of audacious freedom. The group was completed by Donna Cancia, the young lady in waiting of the princesses, and by the Count de Terlizzi, who exchanged with this lady sometimes a furtive look, and at others a slight smile.

The second group was composed of Andrea, the husband of Joan, and his preceptor, a friar, who had followed him from Buda, and never quitted him for an instant. Andrea was at this time about eighteen years old. At first there was something striking in his regular features and fair hair; but, among those animated Italian countenances, his face was wanting in expression, his eyes seemed heavy, and there was something harsh and cold in his whole appearance which betrayed his savage nature and foreign origin. As to Robert, his preceptor Petrarch has handed down his portrait to posterity: florid in complexion, with red hair and beard; short and deformed in stature; haughty in manner, though squalid and filthy; and, like a second Diogenes, scarcely covering his hideous and deformed limbs with his frock.

In the third group was the widow of Philip, Prince of Tarento, the king's brother, honoured at the court of Naples by the title of Empress of Constantinople, a title which she inherited as grand-daughter of Baldwin the Second. Any one accustomed to fathom the depths of the human soul would have seen, at a glance, hatred, envy, and ambition, lurking in this woman's pale and livid face. She was surrounded by her three sons, Robert, Philip, and Louis, the youngest of the three. If the king had wished to select, as the successor to his crown, the handsomest, the most generous, and the bravest of his nephews, there is no doubt that Louis of Tarento would have obtained the preference. At the age of three and twenty he excelled the most renowned knights in the exercises of arms; frank, truthful, and valiant, he no sooner conceived a design than its execution became certain. His countenance beamed with intellectual light, while his soft and gentle manners were irresistibly attractive. A favoured child of Fortune, he had but to wish, and it seemed as if some unknown power—some kind spirit that had presided at his birth—seemed to smooth every difficulty and gratify every desire.

Nearly at his side, in the fourth group, stood his frowning cousin, Charles de Duras. His mother, Agnes, the widow of John, Duke of Duras and Albany, another of the king's brothers, gazed at him with terror, and with an instinctive movement clasped to her bosom her two younger sons, Robert, Prince of Morea, and Ludovic, Count of Gravina. Charles, with a pale visage, short hair, and thick beard, alternately cast his suspicious glances upon his dying uncle, upon Joan and the little Maria, and upon his cousins, and appeared disturbed to such a degree, that he could not remain quiet for a moment. His restless and agitated manner contrasted strangely with the calm and thoughtful countenance of Bertrand d'Artois, who, giving place to his father, drew near the queen, who was placed at the foot of the bed, and thus stood opposite to the Princess Joan. The young man was so entirely absorbed by her beauty that he seemed to observe nothing else in the room.

As soon as Joan and Andrea, the Princes of Tarento and Duras, the Counts of Artois, and Queen Sancia, had taken their places round the deathbed, in a semicircle, and in the order which we have described, the vice-chancellor of the kingdom passed through the crowd of barons, who, according to their rank, were standing behind the princes of the blood; and, after making his obeisance to the king, produced a parchment, sealed with the royal arms, and in the midst of profound silence began, in a solemn tone, to read the will of the king.

"Robert, by the grace of God, King of Sicily and of Jerusalem, &c.,

declares, as his successor to the kingdom of Sicily, and all his other territories, Joan, Duchess of Calabria, eldest daughter of the excellent Duke Charles of Calabria, of illustrious memory. And he moreover names and declares Maria, youngest daughter of the deceased Duke of Calabria, his heiress in the county of Alba, and in the jurisdiction of the valley of Grati, and the territory of Giordano, with all the dependencies thereto appertaining; and ordains that the aforesaid Maria shall receive them, in direct fief, from the abovementioned Duchess of Calabria and her heirs; but with this condition, that if the said Duchess of Calabria shall give and allow to her illustrious sister, in consideration of the above reasons, the sum of ten thousand ounces of gold, as indemnification, the above-mentioned county and jurisdiction shall remain in the possession of the said duchess and her heirs for ever.

"And he moreover wills and ordains, for private reasons, upon which he acts, that the abovementioned Maria shall contract marriage with the very illustrious Prince Louis, the reigning King of Hungary. And if any obstacle arise to these nuptials from the treaty of marriage, which is said to be signed and concluded between the King of Hungary and the King of Bohemia and his daughter, our lord the king directs, that the illustrious Princess Maria shall, in that case, contract marriage with the eldest son of the high and mighty Don Juan, Duke of Normandy, eldest son of the reigning King of France."

At this passage Charles de Duras cast a significant glance upon Maria, unobserved by those present, whose attention was engrossed by the reading of the will. As to the young lady herself, from the time that her name had been first mentioned, her cheeks were glowing like crimson, and, ashamed and embarrassed, she dared not raise her eyes from the ground.

The vice-chancellor continued :—

"And he moreover wills and ordains, that the counties of Forcalquier and Provence should be perpetually united to his kingdom under one government, and forming one inseparable domain; even although there should be several sons or daughters, or for any other reason whatever, this union being of the greatest interest to the mutual safety and prosperity of the kingdom and the abovementioned counties.

"And moreover, he has decided and ordained, that in case of the death, which God forbid! of the Duchess Joan, without having left any legitimate offspring, the principality of Salerno, with the title, profits, and all privileges appertaining thereto, shall descend to the most illustrious Andrea, Duke of Calabria, as well as the yearly revenue of two thousand ounces of gold, for his maintenance.

"And he has moreover decided and ordained, that the queen principally, as well as the venerable father Don Philip, Bishop of Cavaillon, vice-chancellor of the kingdom of Sicily, and the mighty lords Philip de Sanguineto, seneschal of Provence, Godfrey of Marsan, Count of Squillace, admiral of the kingdom, and Charles d'Artois, Count of Arie, shall be, and continue to be regents and administrators, of the abovementioned Lord Andrea, and of the abovementioned ladies, Joan and Maria, until they shall have attained the age of twenty-five years," &c. &c.

When the vice-chancellor had concluded the reading of the will, the king raised himself into a sitting posture; and, after having surveyed in succession his fine and numerous family, he addressed them in the following words :—

"My children," he said, "you are here to listen to my last wishes. I have summoned you round my deathbed, that you may see how the glory of the world passes away. Those, who are termed the great ones of the earth, have important duties to fulfil here, and a great account to render hereafter; it is in this that their greatness consists. I have reigned thirty-three years, and God, before whom I must shortly appear—God, who during my long and painful career has often heard my sighs, can only know the thoughts which distract my soul, in these, my latest moments. In a short time, I shall be laid in my grave, and shall live no longer for this world, but in the memory of those, who will pray for my soul. But before quitting you for ever, you, my grandchildren, whom I have loved with double tenderness; you, my nephews, for whom I have had all the anxieties and the affection of a father, promise me, that you will be as united together in soul and purpose, as you have been united in my heart. I have survived your fathers, though the eldest of them all; and God, doubtless, has preserved me to bind together your affections, by accustoming you to live together in one family, and to look up to one common parent. I have loved you all equally, as a father should, without exception, without preference. I have disposed of my throne according to the law of nature, and the dictates of my conscience. Behold, then, the heirs to the throne of Naples; and you, Joan, and you, Andrea, ever keep in mind the respect and love which ought to exist between husband and wife, and which you have mutually sworn to observe before the altar; and all of you, my nephews, my nobles, my officers, pay homage to your legitimate sovereigns. For you, Andrea of Hungary, Louis of Tarento, Charles de Duras, remember that you are brothers, and woe to him who imitates the perfidy of Cain! may the blood he sheds be upon his head—may he be cursed by heaven, as he is cursed by the lips of a dying man, and may the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, descend upon such as are honest and sincere at the moment, when my soul is recalled to him who gave it!"

The king remained motionless, with uplifted arms, eyes raised towards heaven, and cheeks glowing with extraordinary brightness; while the princes, nobles, and officers, took the oath of fidelity and homage to Joan and her husband. But when the turn of the Princes de Duras came, Charles passed contemptuously by Andrea, and dropping on one knee before the princess, said in a loud voice, kissing her hand as he spoke:

"To you only, my queen, I render my homage."

All eyes were turned with terror towards the dying man; but the good old king was now insensible to all that passed around him. Donna Sancia, observing that he was stiff and motionless, exclaimed, with a voice interrupted by tears and sobs, "The king is dead! Let us pray for his soul."

But in a moment all the princes rushed out of the room, and their passions—till now restrained by the presence of the king—burst forth like a torrent which has overflown its banks.

"Long live Joan!" Robert de Cabane, Louis de Tarento, and Bertrand d'Artois were the first to exclaim, while Andrea's tutor, energetically apostrophising the members of the council of regency, shouted at the top of his voice, "My lords, you already forget the will of the king. You must also cry, Long live Andrea!" and, himself giving the example and making himself heard above the tumult of all the assembled nobles, he shouted with a voice of thunder, "Long live the king of Naples!" But no responsive voice echoed his cry, and Charles de Duras, casting a terrible look upon the Dominican, advanced towards the queen, and taking her by the hand, he drew aside the curtains of the balcony, which looked out upon the square and the town. An immense crowd, visible in the moonlight, covered the space beneath as far as the eye could reach, and thousands of human heads were raised towards the balcony of the palace, anxiously waiting the expected announcement. Then Charles, drawing himself respectfully to one side, and pointing with his hand to his beautiful cousin, cried, "Neapolitan people, the king is dead; long live the queen!"

"Long live Joan, the queen of Naples!" answered the people, with one tremendous shout, which resounded through all parts of the city.

The events which had followed each other on this night, with the rapidity of a troubled dream, had had a powerful effect upon the mind of Joan, and, agitated by a thousand conflicting emotions, she retired to her apartments, and, locking herself in her chamber, gave full vent to her grief. While every one else around the coffin of the Neapolitan monarch were filled with ambition and self-interest, the young queen, refusing all consolation, bitterly mourned the death of her grandfather, who had loved her even to weakness. As to the king, he was solemnly interred in the church of Santa Chiara, which he had founded and consecrated, after having enriched it by the magnificent frescoes of Giotti, and by several precious relics, among which may be seen to this day, behind the high altar, two columns of white marble, taken from the Temple of Solomon. Here also the king's statue still remains, represented upon his tomb in the dress of a king and the robe of a priest, on the right of the monument of his son, Charles, Duke of Calabria.

Immediately after the celebration of the funeral rites, Andrea's preceptor hastily assembled the principal Hungarian nobles; and it was decided in this conclave that despatches should be sent to Elizabeth of Poland, his mother, and to Louis of Hungary, his brother, to inform them of the purport of Robert's will; and that they should, at the same time, lay a complaint before the Papal court of Avignon of the conduct of the princes and Neapolitan people, in proclaiming Joan sole queen of Naples, in contempt of the rights of her husband, for whom they should solicit a bull of coronation.

Brother Robert, who had a profound knowledge of court intrigue, and who, combining the experience of a man of the world with the cunning of a monk, had explained to his pupil that it was necessary to take advantage of the grief into which the king's death had plunged Joan, and not to allow her favourites time to surround her with their flatteries and counsels.

Owing to the violence of Joan's grief, she became the sooner calm and composed; new thoughts began to occupy her mind, the traces of her tears disappeared from her face, and a smile began to sparkle in her humid eyes, like a sunbeam after a shower. This change, anxiously watched and impatiently expected, was soon observed by Joan's young attendant, who then ventured, on her knee, to offer to her beautiful mistress the first congratulations upon her accession to the throne. Joan embraced her tenderly; for Donna Cancia was not merely her attendant, but the companion of her infancy, the depository of all her secrets, and the confidant of her most hidden thoughts. She had one of those open and cheerful faces, which at once inspire confidence and affection. Her beautiful auburn hair, fine blue eyes, arch looking mouth, and delicately rounded chin, gave an irresistible charm to her countenance. Wanton, gay, and fickle, voluptuous and deceitful, but full of wit and talent, and captivating even in her faults, she was, at sixteen, as lovely as an angel, and as depraved as a demon; the whole court adored her, and Joan loved her more than her own sister.

"Well, my dear Cancia," murmured the queen, with a sigh, "you see me very sad, and very unfortunate."

"You see me on the contrary, my beautiful sovereign," replied the confidant, casting a glance of admiration at Joan, "you see me very happy, to be able to kneel at your feet, and be the first to bear testimony to the joy, which animates the Neapolitan people at this moment. Others, perhaps, will envy you the crown which glitters upon your brow, your throne, which is one of the greatest in the world, the acclamations of a whole city assembled together to render you their devotion, rather than their homage; but I, madam, I covet rather your beautiful black hair, your bewitching looks, your ineffable grace, which cause you to be adored by every one."

"You are nevertheless aware, my Cancia, that I have much to complain of, both as a queen and a woman; at fifteen years of age a crown is heavy to bear, and I do not even enjoy the liberty of the meanest of my subjects, the liberty of the affections; before I had attained a sufficient age to think for myself, they sacrificed me to a man whom I can never love."

"But, madam," replied the attendant, in a most insinuating voice, "there is now at this court a young gentleman, who, by his respect, his devotion, and his love, ought to make you forget the wrongs of this foreigner, who is neither worthy of being our king, nor your husband."

The queen sighed deeply.

"How long is it," she replied, "since you lost the power of comprehending my feelings? Ought I to confess to you, that this love makes me miserable? It is true, that at first this criminal emotion made me feel as though a new life was waking in my soul; I have been entranced, seduced by the prayers, the tears, the despair of this young man, by the facilities allowed us by his mother, whom I have ever looked upon as mine; I have loved him—my God! young as I am, to have been so miserable!—strange thoughts sometimes enter my mind, that he loves me no longer, that he has never loved me, that ambition, interest, unworthy motives, have made him pretend a passion, which he has never felt; I myself feel an indifference to him, for which I cannot account; his presence constrains me, his look disturbs me, his voice makes me tremble, I dread it, and would gladly give a year of my youth, that I had never heard it."

These words appeared to move the young confidant deeply; her brow became clouded with sadness, she fixed her eyes upon the ground, and remained for some time silent, showing by her manner more of sorrow than surprise. Then, slowly raising her head, she answered with visible confusion:

"I should not have dared to judge so severely the man whom my sovereign has raised so far above all others, by giving him one look of kindness; but if Robert de Cabane has deserved being reproached with fickleness and ingratitude, and has basely perjured himself, he must be the most worthless of men; for he has despised the happiness which others have prayed to God to grant them, at the price of their salvation. I know one who weeps day and night, without consolation and without hope—who suffers and wastes away from a slow and cruel malady, which one pitying word would cure, if that word were but uttered by the lips of my noble mistress."

"I will hear no more," exclaimed Joan, hastily rising; "I do not wish to add another source of remorse to my life. Misfortune has reached me alike in my lawful and in my illicit love. Alas! I will no longer court my terrible destiny. I will bow my head without murmuring; and, remembering that I am a queen, will live but for the happiness of my subjects."

"Will you, then, forbid me, madam," replied Donna Cancia, in a soft and caressing voice, "will you, then, forbid me to pronounce in your presence the name of Bertrand d'Artois, an unfortunate young man, beautiful as an angel, and bashful as a maiden? And, now that you are queen—now that you hold in your hands the life and death of your subjects—do you refuse mercy to a poor youth, who has committed no other offence than that of adoring you, and is ready to die with joy when you deign to look upon him."

"I have always endeavoured to avoid looking on him!" cried the queen, with a burst of feeling of heart which she found it impossible to restrain; but she immediately added in a severe tone, in order to efface the impression produced upon the mind of her attendant by this avowal:

"I forbid you to mention his name before me; and if he dares to allow any complaint to reach my ears, authorize you to say to him, from me, he shall instantly be banished for ever from my presence."

"In that case, madam, banish me also from your sight; for I shall never have the strength to obey so cruel a command. As to the unfortunate young man himself, who has failed to awaken in your breast one feeling of compassion, you may yourself overwhelm him by your anger—for here he is before you, to learn his fate and to die at your feet!"

At these words, uttered loudly that they might be heard from without, Bertrand d'Artois rushed into the apartment, and fell at the queen's feet. For some time past the young confidant had observed that Robert de Cabane had lost Joan's love, and that his tyranny had become more odious to her than that of her husband. Donna Cancia did not fail to remark that her mistress's eyes frequently rested with a melancholy expression upon Bertrand, a handsome young man of a grave and thoughtful mien; and when she made up her mind to speak in his favour, she was convinced that the queen already loved him. Nevertheless, Joan's brow became flushed, and she was about to give way to anger, when the sound of footsteps was heard in the next room, and the voice of the seneschal, in conversation with her son, came upon the three young people like a clap of thunder. Cancia turned as pale as death; Bertrand believed himself doubly lost, in knowing that his presence would ruin the queen; Joan alone, with the admirable presence of mind which she retained in the most difficult moments of her life, made the young man conceal himself in the large folds of her bed-curtains, where he was completely hidden from view, and then made a sign to Cancia to withdraw before the entrance of the seneschal and her son.

But, previous to introducing these two personages into the royal apartment, we must relate by what extraordinary combination of circumstances, and with what incredible rapidity, the family of the Catanian (as she was called) had risen from the lowest class of the people to the highest rank in the court.

At the time when Donna Violante d'Arragon, the first wife of Robert d'Anjou, was delivered of Charles, who afterwards died the Duke of Calabria, a nurse was sought for him among the most beautiful women of the lower classes. After considerable search the princess fixed on a young

Catanian, named Filippa, the wife of a fisherman of Trapani, and herself a washerwoman. The young woman, after washing one day her linen by the side of a fountain, had had a strange dream, in which she imagined she had been presented at court, that she had married a person of high rank, and received the honours of a great lady; and now, when she was summoned to the palace, her dream seemed about to be realized. Filippa was installed at court, and a few months after she had commenced nursing the royal infant, her husband the fisherman died. About this time, Raymond de Cabane, major-domo of Charles II., having purchased a negro from some pirates, had him baptized by his own name, made him free, and, observing that he was not wanting either in manners or intelligence, he appointed him the king's chief cook, after which he departed to the wars. During the absence of his protector the negro remained at court, and managed his affairs so well, that in a short time he purchased estates, houses, farms, silver plate, and horses, affecting to be able to rival in magnificence the wealthiest nobles in the kingdom; and as he had continued to ingratiate himself more and more in the favour of the royal family, he was promoted from the royal kitchen to the wardrobe. At the same time the Catanian had so well merited the favour of her patrons, that, to recompense her for the attention she had given the child, the princess married her to the negro, and as a nuptial present he received the honour of knighthood. From that time Raymond de Cabane and Filippa the washerwoman rose so rapidly, that their influence at court became established. After the death of Donna Violante, the Catanian gained the friendship of Donna Sancia, Robert's second wife, with whom our readers became acquainted at the commencement of our story. Charles, her foster son, loved her as a mother, and she was successively the confidant of his two wives, more especially of the second, Marie de Valois. And as the *ci-devant* washerwoman had now learnt the usages and manners of the court, as soon as Joan and her sister passed their childhood, she was appointed governess of the young ladies, and at the same time Raymond was made major-domo. Afterwards Marie de Valois, upon her deathbed, recommended to her care the young princesses, and begged her to consider them as her daughters; and Filippa the Catanian, honoured from henceforth as the mother of the heiress of the Neapolitan throne, had sufficient influence to have her husband appointed grand seneschal, one of the seven highest posts in the kingdom, and her three sons made knights. Raymond de Cabane was interred with royal magnificence in the church of the Holy Sacrament, and two of his sons soon afterwards followed him. The third, Robert, a young man of extraordinary strength and beauty, was appointed major-domo, and the two daughters of his eldest brother were married, the one to the Count de Terlizzi, and the other to the Count de Morcone.

Things were in this state, and the power of Filippa seemed firmly established, when an unexpected event took place to weaken her influence, if not to shake in one day to its foundation, the whole edifice of her fortune, so patiently and laboriously raised, stone by stone, to its present height. The stern apparition of brother Robert, who had followed his young pupil, destined from infancy to be the husband of Joan, to the court of Rome, opposed the designs of the Catanian, and seriously threatened her future progress. The monk was not long in observing, that so long as Filippa remained at court, Andrea would be but the slave, if not the victim of his wife. All the energies of brother Robert's mind were therefore secretly concentrated upon one object, the removal of the Catanian, and the overthrow of her power. The prince's preceptor, and the governess of the heiress of the throne, upon their first meeting, exchanged one cold and piercing glance, sufficiently expressive of their reciprocal sentiments. The Catanian, not having the courage to struggle openly with her rival, conceived the scheme of maintaining her waning ascendancy over her pupil, by means of her corruption. She gradually insinuated into her mind the poison of vice, inflamed her young imagination with precocious desires, sowed in her heart the seeds of invincible hatred to her husband, surrounded the unfortunate girl with women of bad character, and, in particular, attached to her person the lovely and seducing Cancia, whose name has been branded with infamy by contemporary writers; and to put a finishing stroke to her atrocious lessons, she prostituted Joan to her own son. The poor child, involved in guilt almost before she knew its nature, yielded to her first passion with all the ardour of youth, and loved Robert de Cabane with such extreme devotion, that the cunning Catanian, congratulating herself upon the success of her infamous undertaking, believed her prey so wholly in her power that she took no pains to prevent her escape.

A year passed on before Joan, absorbed by her own infatuation, conceived the possibility of her lover's insincerity. The young man, more under the influence of ambition than of love, concealed his coldness by an appearance of brotherly intimacy, blind submission, and entire devotedness, and would probably have succeeded for a long time in deceiving his mistress, had not the young Count d'Artois become, in his turn, desperately enamoured of Joan. The eyes of the princess were suddenly opened, in comparing the feelings of the two. With that instinct of the heart which never deceives a woman, she saw that Robert de Cabane loved her for himself, while Bertrand d'Artois would gladly have surrendered his life for her happiness. A ray of light illumined the past, she went over again in her mind the circumstances which had preceded and accompanied her first attachment; and her blood froze in her veins, when the conviction first burst upon her, that she had been sacrificed to a base seducer, by the woman, whom of all others she had loved the dearest, and whom she had called by the name of mother.

Joan communed with herself, and wept bitterly. Deceived in all her affections, she devoured her grief in secret; until at length, animated by sudden indignation, she roused herself from her stupor, and changed her love to disdain. Robert, astonished at her haughty and cold manner to him, after so much tenderness, irritated by his jealousy, and wounded in his self-love, burst forth into bitter reproaches and violent recriminations, and, letting the mask fall from his face, he lost his last hold on the heart of the princess.

Filippa now saw that it was time to interfere: she reproached her son, accusing him of having, by his bad management, undermined all her projects. "Since you are not able to govern her mind by love," she said, "Joan must be ruled by fear. We have the secret of her honour, and she will never dare to rebel against us. It is evident she loves Bertrand d'Artois, whose downcast looks and humble sighs contrast favourably with your haughty negligence and rude bearing. The mother of the princes of Tarento, the Empress of Constantinople, will eagerly seize the opportunity of favouring the amours of the princess, in order to estrange her more and more from her husband; Cancia will be the chosen messenger, and, sooner or later, we shall surprise d'Artois at Joan's feet. And then she will not dare refuse us any thing."

It was in the midst of these intrigues that the old king died; and the Catanian, who had been constantly waiting the time which she had so clearly foreseen, having observed the Count d'Artois steal into Joan's apartment, called her son in a loud voice, and hurrying him away with her:

"Follow me," she cried, "the queen is ours."

It was with this intention that, accompanied by Robert, she now entered the queen's apartment.

. Joan stood in the middle of the room, her face as pale as death, her eyes fixed upon the curtains of her bed. Endeavouring to disguise her agitation by a smile, she made a step towards her governess, and bowed her head to receive the kiss which it was the custom of the Catanian to bestow upon her every morning. Filippa embraced her with affected cordiality, and turning to her son, who had bent one knee to the ground,

"Permit, my fair sovereign," said she, pointing to Robert, "the humblest of your subjects to offer you his sincere congratulations, and to lay his homage at your feet."

"Rise, Robert," said Joan, holding out her hand to him with kindness, and without allowing him to perceive the slightest bitterness in her manner. "We have been brought up together, and I shall never forget that in my infancy—that is to say, in those happy days when we were both innocent—I used to call you brother."

"Since you allow it, madam," answered Robert, with an ironical smile. "I, too, will never cease to remember the names which you once deigned to apply to me."

"For me, I shall forget that I address the Queen of Naples," said the Catanian, "while I hold once more to my heart my well-loved child. Now, madam, dispel this melancholy: you have wept enough, and we have respected your grief sufficiently. It is time you show yourself to the good Neapolitans, who never cease blessing heaven for having given them a queen so fair and generous: it is time to show yourself in your charms before your loyal subjects; and my son, who surpasses them all in fidelity, in order to serve you with the greater zeal, is come before them all, to ask you to grant him one favour."

Joan cast an indignant glance at Robert, and, addressing the Catanian, she rejoined with haughty contempt:

"You, my governess, know that I have nothing to refuse to your son."

"He only asks," continued the governess, "a title which is but due to him, and which he inherits from his father—that of grand seneschal of the kingdom: I trust, my child, you will have no difficulty in complying with his request."

"The members of the council of regency must be first consulted."

"The council will hasten to ratify the wishes of the queen," replied Robert, holding out the parchment to her with a commanding gesture: "you only wish to consult the Count d'Artois."

And he cast a terrible glance upon the curtain, which was at this moment slightly agitated.

"You are right," hastily replied the queen, and, going to the table, she signed the parchment with a trembling hand.

" And now, my child, by all the cares I paid you in your infancy—by that more than maternal love which I have ever felt for you—I implore you to grant us a favour, of which our family will retain an everlasting remembrance."

The queen drew back, crimsoned with anger and astonishment; but, before she could find words to frame her answer, the Catanian continued in the same unmoved tone.

" I ask you to create my son Count d'Eboli."

" I have not the power, madam; the nobles of the kingdom would rise in a body if I were to raise, by my simple authority, to one of the principal counties in the kingdom, the son of a ——"

" Of a washerwoman and a negro, you would say, madam," replied Robert, with a sneer. " Bertrand d'Artois would possibly be offended were I called by the same title as himself."

And he made a step towards the bed, at the same time laying his hand upon the hilt of his sword.

" For pity's sake, Robert!" cried the queen, holding him back; " I will do all that you require."

And she signed the parchment, creating him Count d'Eboli.

" And now, that my title may not be illusory," continued Robert, with the utmost effrontery, " and as you are now engaged in signing, grant me the privilege of taking part in the councils of the crown, and declare, by your good pleasure, that in all matters of importance my mother and myself shall have a deliberative voice in the council."

" Never!" cried Joan, the colour deserting her cheeks; " Filippa, Robert, you abuse my weakness, you are treating your queen unworthily. I have wept and suffered during the whole of these last days, and overcome with sorrow, I have not sufficient strength to occupy myself with affairs of moment. I beseech you to retire, I am ill."

What, my daughter," answered the Catanian, in an hypocritical tone, " do you feel unwell? come then, lie down." And advancing towards the bed, she grasped the curtain which concealed the Count d'Artois.

The queen uttered a piercing shriek, and threw herself before her governess.

" Stop," she cried in a suffocated voice, " here is the privilege which you ask, and now if you value your lives, begone!"

Filippa and her son immediately departed without reply, for they had obtained all that they desired; and Joan, trembling with anger and shame, advanced towards Bertrand d'Artois, who, furious with rage, had drawn his poniard, and was about to rush upon the two favourites to avenge the insults they had offered to their queen; but the young man was soon disarmed by the supplicating power of Joan's beautiful eyes, by the arms thrown beseechingly around his waist, and by the tears which fell upon her cheeks. He fell at her feet, which he kissed with transport. Without remembering to ask her pardon for his presence, without speaking to her of his love, he lavished upon her the most tender caresses, as if they had always been lovers, wiped away her tears, and pressed her beautiful hair with his trembling lips. Joan, by degrees, forgot her anger, her resolutions, and her repentance; soothed by the soft speeches of her lover, she answered in monosyllables, without understanding what she said; her heart beat, as though it would burst from her bosom, and every painful feeling was lost in the happiness of the moment; when a new noise suddenly awoke her from her dream. This time, however, the young count had time to withdraw into a neighbouring apartment, and Joan prepared to receive her unwelcome visitor, with cold and severe dignity.

The person who arrived thus unseasonably, to bring down upon himself the storm which loured on the queen's brow, was Charles, the eldest of the branch of Duras. After presenting his lovely cousin to the people, as their only legitimate sovereign, he sought upon several occasions the opportunity of having an interview with her,—an interview which, in all probability, would be decisive of his schemes. Charles was one of those men who hesitate at no means by which their object may be attained: devoured by ambition; accustomed from his earliest youth to conceal his most ardent desires under a careless levity; proceeding, step by step, towards a determined end, without swerving a single hair's breadth from the way which he had traced out; redoubling his prudence at each victory, and his courage at each defeat; gloomy in pleasure, smiling in hate, impenetrable in the strongest emotions of his life; he had sworn to sit upon the throne of Naples, to which he had for a long time believed himself Robert's heir, as the nearest in succession of his nephews; and to him, in fact, rightly belonged the hand of Joan, if the old king had not resolved, at the close of his reign, to summon Andrea of Hungary, and reinstate the eldest branch in their rights, of which no one had now any recollection. But neither the arrival of Andrea, nor the indifference with which Joan, occupied by other passions, invariably received the advances of her cousin of Duras, had weakened for a moment his resolution; for the love of a woman, and the life of a man, weighed nothing in the mind of Charles, when a crown hung at the other end of the scales.

After hovering round the queen's apartments the whole time she remained strictly invisible, he presented himself, with respectful haste, to inquire after his cousin's health.

Charles conversed for a long time with his cousin, on the enthusiasm which the people had shown upon her accession to the throne, and the brilliant destiny she would have to fill; he drew a rapid and correct picture of the situation of the kingdom; while lavishing praises upon the queen's wisdom, he adroitly pointed out the improvements which the country most urgently required, and he threw into his discourse so much warmth, tempered by discretion, that he began to overcome the unfavourable impression which his arrival had produced. In spite of the errors of a youth depraved by the most lamentable education, Joan was of a noble nature. Rising above her age and sex, while occupying herself with the welfare of her subjects, she forgot her singular situation, and listened to the Duke de Duras with warm interest, and the utmost attention. He proceeded to hazard allusions to the dangers which threatened the young queen; he hinted vaguely at the difficulty of distinguishing true devotion from base obsequiousness and interested attachment: he spoke warmly of the ingratitude of persons who had been loaded with benefits and deeply trusted. Joan, who had just experienced a melancholy proof of the truth of his words, answered with a sigh, and said after a pause,

"I take God to witness my own honest and upright intentions, and pray Him to unmask traitors, and show me who are my true friends! I know that the burden which is imposed upon me is a heavy one, and that I must not count too much upon my own strength: but the tried experience of the persons to whom my grandfather has confided my youth, the number of my family, and, above all, your pure and cordial friendship, will assist me, I trust, in the accomplishment of my duties."

"It is my most sincere prayer that you may succeed, my fair cousin. It is not my wish to darken the moments which should be given up to happiness, by thoughts of mistrust and doubt. I do not wish to mingle with the joy which bursts from every part of the kingdom, in saluting you as queen, useless regrets at the blind destiny which placed by the side of a woman whom we all adore—by your side, my cousin, from whom one single glance renders a man far happier than the angels—a stranger, unworthy of sharing your heart, incapable of partaking your throne."

"You forget, Charles," said the queen, stretching out her hand as ir to arrest his words, "you forget that Andrea is my husband, and that it is the will of my grandfather that he shall reign with me."

"Never!" cried the duke, indignantly. "He, King of Naples! Consider that the city will be shaken to its foundations—that the people will revolt in a mass—before the Neapolitans will allow themselves to be governed by a handful of drunken and ferocious Hungarians, by a deformed and hypocritical monk, by a prince whom we detest as much as we love you."

"But what is it you reproach him with? What has he done?"

"What has he done? What do we reproach him with? The people reproach him with being incapable, clownish, and brutal; the nobles reproach him with the violation of their privileges, and with patronising men of obscure birth; and I, madam," he continued, lowering his voice, "I reproach him with being the cause of your unhappiness."

Joan started, as if a rude hand had been laid upon her wound; but, concealing her emotion under an apparent calm, she answered in a tone of indifference:

"I think you rave, Charles; who has authorized you to believe me unhappy?"

"Do not endeavour to excuse him, my cousin," replied Charles emphatically; "you will but ruin yourself, without saving him."

The queen fixed upon her cousin a piercing look, as if to read the depths of his soul, and to fathom the meaning of those words; but not being able to believe the horrible thought which at first rose to her mind, in order to penetrate his motives she affected entire confidence in his friendship, and proceeded in her former indifferent tone:

"Well, Charles, supposing that I am not happy, what cure can you propose to me for the evil?"

"Do you ask it, my cousin? Are not all means justifiable for your happiness?"

"But Andrea will not easily renounce his pretensions: he is supported by a powerful party, and in case of an open rupture, his brother, the King of Hungary, will declare war against us, and bring desolation into the kingdom."

The Duke de Duras smiled slightly, and his features assumed a sinister expression.

"You do not understand my meaning, cousin."

"Explain it, then, without delay," said the queen, endeavouring to conceal the cold shudder which came over her at these words.

"Listen, Joan," said Charles, taking her hand, and placing it on his breast. "Do you feel this dagger?"

"I feel it," said Joan, turning pale.

"One word from you—and——"

"Well, proceed."

"To-morrow you shall be free!"

"A murder!" cried Joan, recoiling with horror. "I have, then, been deceived! It is a murder which you have been proposing."

"Undoubtedly!" replied the duke, calmly, "it is indispensable. To-day it is I who advise it: later, it will be you who will command it."

"Enough, wretch! I do not know whether your conduct is more base than bold, or more bold than base: base, in having avowed to me a criminal project, because you knew I would not denounce you; bold, in having avowed it to me without knowing whether other ears than mine listened to your atrocious language."

"Well, madam, since I am now at your mercy, you will understand that I cannot leave you without knowing whether I am to consider you as my friend or my enemy."

"Away!" cried Joan, with a gesture of scorn, "you insult your queen!"

"You forget, my cousin, that one day I may have a right to your kingdom."

"Do not force me to have you thrust from my presence," said Joan, advancing towards the door.

"Restrain your passion, my fair cousin. I leave you; but recollect at least, that I have offered you my help, and that you have refused it. Remember well what I say to you at this very serious moment. To-day, I am the culprit—to-morrow, perhaps, I shall be the judge."

And he slowly retired, twice turning his head, and renewing, by a warning gesture, his threatening prophecy. Joan hid her face in her hands, and remained a long time buried in melancholy thought, until, anger predominating over all other feelings, she summoned Cancia, and ordered her on no pretext whatever to permit any person to enter her apartment.

This prohibition did not extend to the Count d'Artois, for the reader will remember that he was in the adjoining room.

Night had by this time thrown its shadow around, and the deepest silence had succeeded to the thousand cries of the most noisy city in the world. Charles de Duras, hurrying rapidly from the palace, plunged into the labyrinth of narrow and winding streets, which cross each other in all directions in the old city, and after a quarter of an hour's walk, sometimes slow, and at others rapid, according to the workings of his mind, he arrived at his own mansion. After giving some orders to one of his pages, to whom he handed his sword and cloak, Charles proceeded to his apartment, without visiting his poor mother, who, sad and solitary, was at this moment weeping at the ingratitude of her son, and avenging herself, like all mothers, by praying to God for him.

The Duke de Duras strode to and fro in his chamber, like a lion in his cage, counting the minutes in violent impatience. He was about to summon one of his servants to renew his orders, when two gentle taps at the door announced to him that the person whom he expected had arrived. He opened it quickly, and a man of about fifty years old, dressed in black, entered with the most humble reverences, and carefully closing the door after him. Charles threw himself upon a seat, and fixing an earnest look upon the man who stood before him with downcast eyes, and his arms crossed upon his breast, in an attitude of the most profound respect, he said to him slowly, and emphatically,

"Master Nicolas de Melazzo, do you retain any remembrance of the favours which I have shown you?"

The man to whom these words were addressed, shuddered, as though he had heard the voice of Satan reclaiming his soul; and casting a terrified glance upon his interrogator, he inquired in a low voice,

"What have I done, my lord, to deserve such a reproach?"

"I do not mean it as a reproach, notary, it is a simple question."

"Can you doubt for a moment, my lord, my eternal gratitude? I forget what I owe to your excellency! Even supposing I had so completely lost my senses and my memory, have I not my wife and my son, to remind me daily that to you we owe fortune, life, and honour? I am guilty of an infamous action," continued the notary, lowering his voice; "of a crime, which not only draws down upon me the punishment of death, but the confiscation of my goods, the ruin of my family, the misery and shame of my only son,—of that same son, for whom, wretch that I was, I wished to secure a brilliant future, by means of a dreadful crime; in your hands were the proofs of this crime—"

"They are so still—"

"You will not destroy me, my lord," exclaimed the notary, trembling from head to foot; "you see me at your feet; take my life, your excellency, I will expire in torments without one complaint; but save my son, since you have been merciful enough to spare him until now; mercy for his mother! mercy, mercy, my lord!"

"Be calm," said Charles, making him a sign to rise, "there is now no question of your life, although that perhaps may one day come. What I require of you at present is much easier."

"I await your orders, my lord."

"At once then," continued the duke, in an ironical tone of rapture, "you will draw out, in form, my marriage contract."

"Say on, your excellency."

"You will write in the first place, that my wife shall bring me as a marriage portion, the county of Alba, the government of Grati and Giordano, with all the castles, fiefs, and territories, belonging to them."

"But, my lord—" answered the poor notary, in the greatest embarrassment.

"Do you find any difficulty in the execution of my orders, master Nicolas?

"God forbid, your excellency! but—"

"What is it then that disturbs you?"

"It is—if my lord will allow me—it is, that there is but one person in Naples who possesses the property which your excellency describes to me."

"Well?"

"And that person," stammered the notary, in still greater confusion, "is the sister of the queen."

"Exactly; and therefore you will fill up the contract with the name of Maria d'Anjou."

"But," continued master Nicolas, timidly, "the young princess, whom your excellency wishes to marry, has been destined, I think, by the will of our deceased lord the king, of happy memory, to become the wife either of the reigning King of Hungary, or of the grandson of the King of France."

"Ah! ah! I begin to understand your astonishment, my dear notary: this will teach you in future, that the will of the uncle is not always the desire of the nephew."

"In this case, if I dared—if my lord would deign to grant me permission—if I had any advice to offer, I would humbly implore your excellency to reflect, that you are planning the abduction of a minor."

"How long is it since you came by these scruples, master Nicolas?"

This question was accompanied by so terrible a look, that the poor notary had scarcely sufficient strength to answer him.

"In an hour the contract shall be ready."

"And now that we are agreed upon the first point," continued Charles, resuming his natural tone of voice, "pay attention to my second commission. I understand you have been intimately acquainted, for some years past, with the valet de chambre of the Duke of Calabria."

"Tommaso Pace; he is my dearest friend."

"Excellent! Listen, then, and remember, that upon your discretion depends the prosperity or the ruin of your family. A plot is about to be laid against the queen's husband; the conspirators will, doubtless, gain over Andrea's valet to their schemes—this man whom you call your best friend. Never leave him for a moment—stick to him like his shadow; and day by day, hour by hour, report faithfully to me the progress of the conspiracy, and the names of the conspirators."

"Is this all that your excellency has to command?"

"All."

The notary bowed respectfully, and departed to execute without delay the orders he had received. Charles passed the rest of the night in writing to his uncle, the Cardinal of Perigord, one of the most influential prelates at the court of Avignon. He prayed him, above all, to prevent Charles VI. from signing the bull of the coronation of Andrea; and closed his letter by the most earnest entreaties to his uncle to obtain permission from the pope for him to marry the queen's sister.

"We shall see, my cousin," said he, as he closed his letter, "which of us two best understands our interests. You will not accept me for a friend. Good: then you shall have me for an enemy. Sleep on, in the arms of your lovers; I will awaken you when the time is come. One day, perhaps, I shall be Duke of Calabria: and that title, you are aware, my cousin, is that of heir to the throne!"

From that time an entire change took place in Charles's manner towards Andrea. He loaded him with marks of the liveliest sympathy, cunningly flattered his tastes, and pretended to brother Robert that, far from being adverse to Andrea's coronation, his most ardent desire was to see the wishes of his uncle respected; and that if he had seemed to act contrary to his sentiments, he had done so with the object of appeasing the populace, who, he feared, in their first excitement would have risen against the Hungarians. He energetically declared that he cordially detested those persons who surrounded the queen in order to mislead her by their advice, and [illegible] to join with brother Robert, in an effort to [illegible] every means which fortune threw in his way. Although the [illegible] was by no means persuaded of the sincerity of his ally, he did not accept with the less joy a supporter who might be so useful to the cause of the prince; attributing the sudden conversion of Charles to a recent rupture with his cousin, and trusting to turn the resentment of the Duke of Duras to account. Charles, in the mean time, had insinuated himself so completely into Andrea's good graces, that in a few days they became inseparable. If Andrea prepared for hunting, Charles hastened to get his hounds and hawks; if Andrea rode through the town, Charles was sure to be at his side. He yielded to all his caprices, flattered him to excess, inflamed his passions; and, in short, he was the familiar spirit who prompted all the thoughts of the prince, and directed all his actions.

Joan well understood these manœuvres. She could have undermined Duras by a single word; but, disdaining so poor a revenge, she continued to treat him with the utmost contempt.

The court was now divided into two parties; on the one side the Hungarians, directed by brother Robert, and openly supported by Charles de Duras; and on the other, the whole of the Neapolitan nobles, headed by the princes of Tarento. Joan, governed by Filippa and her two daughters, the Countesses of Terlizzi and Morcone, by Cancia, and by the Empress of Constantinople, embraced the Neapolitan party against her husband. The first act of the queen's partisans was to have her name inscribed to all public acts, without the addition of Andrea's signature; but Joan, guided, in the midst of her moral corruption, by the instinct of probity and justice, would never have consented to this step had she not been so advised to it by Andrea d'Isemia, one of the ablest lawyers of the day, equally respected for his character and talents. The prince, irritated at seeing himself thus excluded from all the functions of his station, returned the insult by acts of violence and despotism. He delivered prisoners by his sole authority, shared his favours amongst the Hungarians, and heaped honours and riches upon Giovanni Pipino, Count of Altamura, the greatest enemy of the Neapolitan nobles. It was then that the Counts of San-Severino, Mileto, Terlizzi, Balzo, Catanzaro, together with the principal part of the aristocracy of the kingdom, exasperated by the daily insolence of Andrea's favourite, decided, not only upon his ruin, but also upon that of his protector, if he persisted in attacking their privileges and braving their resentment. On the other hand, the women who surrounded the queen, encouraged her, each according to her own interest, in her new passion; and poor Joan, deserted by her husband, betrayed by Cabane, bending under the burden of duties beyond her strength, sought refuge in the love of Bertrand d'Artois, against which she no longer endeavoured to contend. As to Bertrand, he adored her with impassioned ardour. Arrived at a height of happiness which, in his wildest ravings, he had not dared to hope, the young count almost lost his senses. In vain did his father, Charles of Artois, Count of Ané, a lineal descendant of Philip the Bold, and one of the regents of the kingdom, endeavour, by the severest admonitions, to draw him from the brink of the precipice on which he was standing; Bertrand listened to nothing but his love for Joan, and his deadly hatred for all her enemies. Often at the close of day, while the breeze from Pausilippo or Sorrento was playing amongst his hair, he might have been seen leaning upon one of the casements of the Castel-Nuovo, pale and motionless, gazing fixedly upon the street below, at the moment when the Dukes of Calabria and Duras, galloping side by side in the midst of a cloud of dust, were gaily returning from their evening ride. At this sight his brows became bent, and thoughts of vengeance and death took possession of his soul. Suddenly he might have been observed to start; a light hand was laid upon his shoulder, and turning softly, for fear lest the divine apparition should vanish, he would see standing behind him a young woman with flushed cheeks, heaving breast, and moist and sparkling eyes, who had come to relate to him in what duties and labours she had been passing the day. And this girl, who had been dictating laws, and administering justice among grave magistrates and austere ministers, was but fifteen years of age; while the young man, who consoled her in her grief, and meditated regicide to avenge her, was not yet twenty: two children, thrown upon the world to be the sport of so terrible a destiny.

CHAPTER II.

Two months and some days had elapsed since the death of the old king, when one morning, Friday, the 28th of March, 1343, Filippa, who had managed to obtain the queen's pardon for the base ambush by which she had forced her to sign whatever her son required: Filippa, we say, in unassumed consternation, pale and agitated, entered the apartments of the queen, to announce to her a circumstance which would spread alarm and confusion throughout the court. Maria had disappeared. Search had been made in all the courts and gardens without discovering any trace of her; every corner of the palace had been examined; the guards had been interrogated, and threatened with the torture, to draw the truth from them, in vain. No one had seen the princess, and there was no indication which could justify the supposition of a flight or an abduction. Joan was overcome by this unexpected blow in addition to all her former troubles, and was at first completely stunned by the intelligence. Even when she had recovered from the first shock she appeared out of her senses. She gave orders which were already executed, repeated the same inquiries a thousand times, and followed up her questions with useless lamentations and unjust reproaches. In a short time the news had spread in all directions, and the greatest excitement prevailed throughout the city, while confusion reigned in the palace. The members of the council of regency assembled in haste; couriers were despatched, announcing a reward of three thousand golden ducats to the person who should discover where the princess was concealed; and the soldiers who were guarding the fortress at the time of her disappearance were thrown into prison.

Bertrand d'Artois drew the queen aside, and communicated to her his suspicions, which were directed against Charles de Duras; but Joan convinced him of the improbability of his supposition. In the first place, Charles had never once set foot in the palace since the day of his stormy interview with the queen; and secondly, no one had ever observed that the young duke had addressed a single word to Maria, or exchanged a look with her. It was at length proved by all the witnesses examined, that no stranger had penetrated into the interior of the palace on the evening preceding the event, except a notary, of the name of master Nicolas de Melazzo, an imbecile old man, for whom Tommaso Pace, the Duke of Calabria's valet de chambre, would answer with his head. Bertrand acquiesced in the queen's reasoning, and day after day he suggested new conjectures more or less improbable, to sustain his mistress in hopes, which he was far from feeling.

A month after the disappearance of the young princess, the inhabitants of Naples were stupified with astonishment, and the grief of Joan and her friends converted into rage, by a strange and unheard of scene, almost surpassing belief. Upon the clock of the church of San-Giovanni striking noon, the gates of the magnificent palace of the Duras family were thrown open, and a double file of horsemen gallantly mounted, bearing upon their shields the ducal arms, came forth to the sound of trumpets, and ranged themselves round the house, in order to prevent the people without from interrupting the proceedings which were about to take place, (before the eyes of an immense crowd, collected suddenly, and as if by enchantment,) before the palace. An altar had been raised at the bottom of the court, and before it were placed two crimson velvet cushions embroidered in gold; with the fleurs-de-lis of France and the ducal coronet. Charles then advanced magnificently attired, and holding by the hand the queen's sister, the Princess Maria, a girl not above thirteen years old. She knelt timidly upon one of the cushions, and when Charles had done the same, the grand almoner of the family solemnly inquired of the young duke, what were his intentions in presenting himself in that humble attitude before one of the ministers of the church. At these words, Nicolas de Melazzo placed himself on the left side of the altar, and commenced reading in a loud and firm voice the marriage contract between Charles and Maria, followed by the apostolical letters of his holiness the sovereign pontiff, Clement VI., who, removing all the obstacles which could prevent this union, such as the age of the young maiden, and the degree of relationship existing between the pair, authorized his well-beloved son, Charles Duke of Duras and Albany, to espouse the very illustrious Maria d'Anjou, sister of Joan, Queen of Naples and Jerusalem, and gave them his benediction.

The almoner then took the hand of the young princess, and having placed it in that of Charles, he pronounced the prayers of the church. After which, Charles, half turning towards the people, said in a loud voice,

"Before God and man, this is my wife."

"And this is my husband," replied Maria, trembling.

"Long live the Duke and Duchess of Duras," cried the crowd clapping their hands.

And the newly-married pair, mounted upon superb horses, made the circuit of the city; after which they re-entered their palace amidst the shouts of the populace, and the flourishes of trumpets.

When this incredible news was communicated to the queen, her first impression was that of great joy at the recovery of her sister; and as Bertrand d'Artois was about to mount his horse at the head of the nobles, to attack the cortege and punish the ravisher, Joan retained him by the hand, and fixing her eyes upon him, with an expression of the deepest melancholy,

"Alas!" she said, "it is too late! they are lawfully married, since the head of the church, who is at the same time, by the will of my grandfather, the head of our family, has granted them his permission. I can but pity my unfortunate sister; I pity her for being so young the prey of a monster who will sacrifice her to his ambition, hoping to obtain by these nuptials the right to my crown. My God! what a strange fatality is hanging over the royal branch of Anjou! my father died young, in the midst of his triumphs: my poor mother was not long in following him to the grave, and my sister and myself, the last of the race of Charles I., before arriving at womanhood, are delivered to wretches, who regard us but as footstools by which they may mount to power."

Joan fell upon a seat, while a tear quivered upon her eyelid.

"This is the second time," replied Bertrand, in a reproachful tone, "that I have drawn my sword to revenge you, and the second time that, by your orders, I have sheathed it;—but remember, Joan, that the third time I shall not obey you so easily; for then my vengeance shall neither fall upon Robert of Cabane, nor upon Charles of Duras,—but upon him who is the origin of all your misfortunes."

"For pity's sake, Bertrand, do not you also speak to me upon such a subject. Am I not already unfortunate enough, without embittering my future life by eternal remorse? Speak to me rather of pardon and oblivion, than of hate and vengeance; show me one ray of hope amidst the darkness which environs me, and sustain my tottering steps, rather than assist in thrusting me into the abyss."

These altercations were repeated upon every new injury from Andrea and his party; and in proportion as the remonstrances of Bertrand and his friends became more urgent, and, it must be allowed, more just, Joan's resistance was more feeble. The Hungarian domination became daily more and more arbitrary and insupportable; the people began to murmur, and the nobles loudly expressed their discontent. Andrea's soldiers gave themselves up to excesses, which would not have been tolerated in a conquered city: they might be met with at every turn, squabbling in taverns, or wallowing in the most revolting state of drunkenness; while the prince, far from condemning their orgies, was accused of partaking them. His old tutor, whose duty it was, by his authority, to have drawn him from this ignoble state of existence, plunged him into brutish pleasures, to withdraw him from business, and hastened, without suspecting it, the catastrophe of the terrible drama which was in secret preparation at the Castel Nuovo.

Robert's widow, Donna Sancia d'Arragon, the pious and excellent woman, whom our readers have, perhaps, forgotten in the same manner as she was forgotten in her family, seeing the vengeance of Heaven about to fall upon her house, without having the power to arrest it by her counsels, prayers, or tears, after a whole year's stay in the palace, according to the promise she had made to her husband, took the veil, abandoning the wretched country to its insane passions, after the manner of the prophets of old, who shook the dust from off their sandals, and fled from the accursed cities, devoted to destruction. Sancia's retreat was a melancholy omen, and in a short time, the intestine dissensions, hitherto concealed with difficulty, burst into the light of day. The storm which had been gathering in the distance, broke suddenly upon the city, and the thunderbolt was not long in descending.

On the last day of August, 1344, Joan paid homage to the legate of the pope, who, since the donation which his predecessors had made of it to Charles of Anjou, after the excommunication and dethronement of the house of Suabia, had continued to look upon the kingdom of Naples as a fief belonging to the church. The church of Santa Chiara, the tomb of the Neapolitan monarchs, in which reposed, at the right and left of the high altar, the queen's father and grandfather, was chosen for this solemn ceremony. Joan, arrayed in the royal robes, and wearing her crown, took the oath of fidelity before the apostolical legate, in the presence of her husband, who stood behind her merely as a witness, in the same manner as the other princes of the blood. Amongst the prelates who formed the august suite of the ambassador from Avignon, the archbishops of Pisa, Bari, Capua, and Brindisi, Ugolino, bishop of Castella, and Philip, bishop of Cavaillon, the queen's chancellor, were particularly distinguished. The whole of the Neapolitan, as well as the Hungarian nobles, were present at this act, which discarded Andrea from the throne in so formal and glaring a manner. Upon their return, therefore, from the church, the excitement of the two parties had reached such an alarming height, they exchanged such hostile looks and threatening words, that the prince, finding himself too weak to oppose his enemies, wrote the same evening to his mother, informing her of his intention of quitting a country, in which, from his infancy, he had experienced nothing but deception and misfortune.

Those who know the heart of a mother will not require to be told, that hardly was Elizabeth of Poland made aware of her son's danger, ere she had arrived in Naples, before any one had suspicion of her approach. It was soon rumoured about, that the queen of Hungary had come to take her son away with her; and this unexpected step raised strange comments, and gave a new direction to the feverish disquiet of the public mind. The Empress of Constantinople, the Catanian, her two daughters, and all the courtiers, whose designs would have been thwarted by Andrea's sudden departure, hastened to welcome the arrival of the queen of Hungary, by the most cordial and respectful reception, to prove to her, that the solitude and sullenness of the young prince, in the midst of so brilliant and devoted a court, was entirely owing to his own distrustful pride, and the natural waywardness of his temper. Joan received her husband's mother with so much propriety and dignity, that, in spite of her preconceived dislike, Elizabeth could not avoid admiring the character of her daughter-in-law. To render the noble stranger's stay in Naples more agreeable to her, fêtes and tournaments were commenced, in which the nobles of the kingdom strove to excel each other in pomp and splendour. The Empress of Constantinople, Filippa, Charles de Duras, and his young wife, were the most assiduous in their attentions to the prince's mother. Maria, who, from her extreme youth, and the innocence of her character, took no share in the passing intrigues, yielded more to the impulse of her heart, than to the commands of her husband, in treating the queen of Hungary with all the affection and tenderness of a daughter to a mother. But, notwithstanding all these appearances of respect and love, Elizabeth of Poland, trembling for her son, by an instinct of maternal solicitude, persisted in her first resolution, not believing him in safety until he was far away from that court, so calm in appearance, so perfidious in reality.

The man who felt the greatest consternation at this proposed departure, and who endeavoured to prevent it by every means in his power, was brother Robert. Plunged into the depths of political intrigue, and bent on the accomplishment of mysterious plans, the Dominican saw his game about to be lost at the moment, when, by force of cunning, labour, and patience, he at length felt himself able to crush his enemies. But the voice of fear spoke louder in Elizabeth's heart than the monk's reasoning, and at each argument he brought forward, she contented herself with replying, that so long as her son was not king, and had not entire and unlimited power, it was imprudent to leave him exposed to his enemies. The minister seeing that all would be lost, and that it would be impossible to contend with this woman's apprehensions, begged of her to grant him three days; and if, at the conclusion of that space, the answer he expected had not arrived, not only would he desist from opposing Andrea's departure, but he himself would follow him, renouncing for ever the objects which had cost him so much.

Towards the end of the third day, and as Elizabeth was definitively preparing to set off, the monk entered her room with a joyful air, and showing her a letter:

"God be praised, madam," cried he in a triumphant voice, "I can now give you an indisputable proof of the activity of my zeal, and of the soundness of my foresight."

Andrea's mother, after eagerly perusing the parchment, fixed her eyes upon the monk with an expression of doubt, hardly daring to credit the happy intelligence.

"Yes, madam," continued the monk, "yes, madam, you may believe your eyes, although you would not believe my words; you deemed my plan but the raving of a too ardent imagination, the hallucination of a too credulous mind, instead of its being a carefully conceived scheme, slowly worked out, and cunningly conducted; the fruit of my labours, the sole thought of my days, the work of my whole life. I was not ignorant that your son's cause had powerful enemies at the court of Avignon; but I was also aware, that on the day upon which I, in the name of my prince, should solemnly engage to repeal those laws which were the cause of the coolness between the pope and Robert, otherwise so devoted to the church; I was aware they could not resist my offer, and this proposal I retained as a last resource. You see, madam, that my calculations were correct, our enemies are confounded, and your son is triumphant."

And turning to Andrea, who at that moment entered the room:

"Approach, my son," he exclaimed, "our wishes are at length accomplished, and you are king!"

"King!" repeated Andrea, motionless with joy, doubt, and astonishment.

"King of Sicily and Jerusalem; oh! yes, my lord, you do not require to read it in this parchment, which brings us such joyful and unhoped for intelligence, you may see it in your mother's tears, who is opening her arms to fold you to her breast; you may see it in your preceptor's transports, who throws himself at your feet, to salute you by a title which he would have sealed by his own blood, had it been much longer denied to you."

"Nevertheless," said Elizabeth, after remaining for some time in deep thought, "did I listen to my presentiments, this news should make no alteration in our departure."

"No, my mother," replied Andrea with energy, "you would not have me quit the kingdom to the detriment of my honour. If I have confided to you the bitterness and the misery which my enemies have heaped upon my youth, it was not cowardice which made me act thus, but my inability to take a terrible revenge for their secret insults, open outrages, and underhand plots. It was not strength that I wished for to my arms, but a crown upon my head. I might have been able to have crushed some of these wretches, perhaps the most audacious, perhaps the least dangerous; but I should have struck in the dark, the chiefs would have escaped me, I should not have reached the heart of this infernal conspiracy. For this reason, I have devoured in silence my shame and indignation. But now that my sacred claims are recognised by the church, you, my mother, shall see these valiant nobles, these counsellors of the queen, these ministers of the kingdom, you shall see them lick the dust beneath my feet; for it shall not be a sword which shall threaten them, it shall be no combat which I shall propose to them, it shall not be an equal that shall speak to them; no! the king shall accuse, the law condemn, and the gibbet punish."

"Oh, my dear son," cried the weeping queen, "I have never doubted either the nobleness of your sentiments or the justice of your claims; but when your life is in danger, can I listen to any other voice but that of fear? Can I hear any other advice but that with which my love inspires me?"

"Credit me, my mother, if the hands of these wretches had not trembled as much as their hearts, you would long since have mourned your son."

"And therefore it is not violence that I dread, but treachery."

"My life belongs to God, as all men's do, and the commonest person may take it at a street corner; but a king must confide in his people."

The poor mother endeavoured for a long time, by reasoning and entreaties, to change Andrea's resolution; but when she had exhausted her last argument, and shed her last tear, she summoned Bertram de Baux, chief judge of the kingdom, and Maria, Duchess of Duras, and, confiding in the wisdom of the old man and the innocence of the young woman, she recommended her son to their care; then drawing from her finger a richly chased ring, she took Andrea aside and placed it upon his finger, and, clasping him in her arms,

"My son," she said, in a trembling voice, "since you refuse to accompany me, here is a talisman, which I never make use of but in the last extremity. While you retain this ring upon your finger, neither steel nor poison can injure you."

"You see, then, my mother," answered the prince, smiling, "thus protected, you have no reason to fear for my life."

"There are other deaths besides by poison or steel," replied the queen, sighing.

"Take courage, my mother; the most potent talisman against all dangers will be your prayers to God for me. The remembrance of you shall sustain me in the path of duty; and your maternal love will watch me from afar, and will cover me with its wings like a guardian angel."

Elizabeth embraced her son again and departed, followed by the whole court, who continued to pay her the utmost courtesy and respect. The poor mother, pale and trembling, leant upon her son's arm. When they had reached the vessel which was to separate them for ever, she threw herself for the last time upon his neck, and remained for some time without uttering a sound, shedding a tear, or making the slightest motion; and when the signal of departure was given, her women received her in their arms almost insensible. Andrea remained standing upon the beach, his eyes fixed upon the vessel, now rapidly disappearing, which contained the only being upon earth whom he loved.

Almost at the same time that Andrea's mother left the kingdom, the dowager Queen of Naples, widow of Robert, Donna Sancia, of Arragon, breathed her last. She was interred in the convent of Santa Maria, under the name of Chiara, which name she had assumed when she took the veil.

A week after the old queen's funeral, Bertrand d'Artois entered Joan's room, pale as death, his hair dishevelled, and in a state of indescribable agitation. Joan, in great terror, rushed towards her lover, inquiring by a look the cause of his trouble.

"I said truly, madam," cried the young count, passionately; "that you would ruin us all by obstinately refusing to listen to my advice."

"For pity's sake, Bertrand, say at once what has happened; what advice have I refused to follow?"

"My news, madam, is, that your noble husband, Andrea of Hungary, has been recognised by the court at Avignon, King of Naples and Jerusalem; and that from this time forth you are but his slave."

"You rave, Count of Artois."

"I do not rave, madam; what I tell you is the very truth. The pope's legates, who bring the bull of coronation, are ready at Capua; and if they do not enter the palace this evening, it is but to leave the new king time to make his preparations."

The queen staggered, as though a thunderbolt had burst at her feet.

"When I told you," continued the count, with increasing violence, "that force must be repelled by force—that to break from the yoke of this infamous tyranny, it would be necessary to destroy this man, before he had the means of destroying you—you always recoiled, from childish fear and imbecile hesitation."

Joan cast upon her lover a tearful glance.

"My God! my God!" cried she, clasping her hands together despairingly, "must I, then, ever hear around me this fatal cry of death? And you, too, Bertrand—you, in your turn, echo the sound as well as Charles of Duras or Robert of Cabane! Enough of crimes. If my husband's ambition urges him to reign, let him; I will give him my power, provided he leaves me your love!"

"But are you sure that our love will have a long duration?"

"What do you mean, Bertrand? You take pleasure in torturing me."

"I say, madam, that the new king has ordered a black flag to be prepared, which will be carried before him on his coronation day."

"And you think," said Joan, turning as pale as a corpse, "you think this flag is intended as a menace?"

"A menace, the execution of which is already commenced."

The queen tottered, and held by the table to prevent herself from falling.

"Tell me all," she said, in a stifled voice; "do not fear terrifying me: see, I do not tremble. Oh! Bertrand, I implore you!"

"The traitors have commenced by the man whom you esteem the most—by the wisest counsellor of the crown, the most just magistrate, the noblest heart, the most rigid virtue——"

"Andrea of Isernia!"

"Madam, he is no more!"

Joan uttered a scream, as if they had murdered before her eyes the noble old man whom she respected as a father; then, falling into a seat, she remained motionless and silent.

"How did they murder him?" she at length inquired.

"Yesterday evening, as he was leaving the palace to proceed to his own house, a man suddenly advanced towards him near the gate of Petrucia. This man is one of your husband's favourites, Conrad of Gottis, who was doubtless chosen on account of his having to complain of a sentence which the incorruptible magistrate had given against him, that the murder might be set down to the score of private vengeance. The villain made a sign to two or three of his companions, who surrounded their victim, shutting out all means of escape. The poor old man looked fixedly on his assassin, and inquired of him in a calm voice what he wanted. "I want to lose you your life, as you lost me my cause," cried the murderer, running him through the body with his sword. The remaining villains then threw themselves upon the unfortunate man, covered him with wounds, hideously mangled his corpse, and left it bathed in blood."

"Horror!" murmured the queen, covering her face with her hands.

"This is but their beginning, for the lists of proscription are full. Andrea must have blood to celebrate his accession to the throne of Naples. Do you know, Joan, who is at the head of the condemned?"

"Who?" inquired the queen, trembling from head to foot.

"Myself," answered the count, in a calm voice.

"You!" cried Joan, recovering her dignity—"you they are about to slay! Oh! beware, Andrea, lest you pronounce your own doom. I have long turned aside the poniard which gleamed at your breast; beware that you do not exhaust my patience. Wo to thee, Prince of Hungary! the blood you have shed be on your own head."

So saying, the colour returned to her cheeks, her beautiful face glowed with the fire of vengeance, and her eyes shot forth lightnings. This child of sixteen was terrible to behold; she clasped her lover's hand with convulsive tenderness, and kept close at his side, as though she wished to defend him with her body.

"Your anger is awakened a little too late," continued the young count in a melancholy voice; for Joan looked so beautiful at that moment, that he had not the power to reproach her. "Do you not know that his mother has left him a talisman, which protects him from poison or steel?"

"Nevertheless, he dies," replied Joan, in a firm voice; and the smile which passed over her face was so wild, that the count, terrified in his turn, dropped his eyes upon the ground.

Upon the following day, the young queen of Naples, more beautiful and fascinating than ever, was seated carelessly by a casement, from which the magnificent view of the bay was spread before her eyes, and was working with her delicate hands a rope of silk and gold. The sun was slowly sinking into the blue waters in which Pausilippo was reflected, with its ridge crowned with flowers and verdure. The mild and perfumed breeze, after having passed over the orange-groves of Sorrento and Amalfi, was wafting its delicious freshness to the inhabitants of Naples. The whole city had awakened from its noonday slumber; the mole was covered with a gay and countless multitude; and from all points of the vast amphitheatre there arose sounds of joy and festivity. Joan listened to these sounds, with her head bent upon her work, and seemingly absorbed in deep thought. Suddenly, and at the moment when she seemed most occupied, the sound of suppressed breathing, and an almost imperceptible touch upon her shoulder, made her start. Turning round, she perceived it was her husband, magnificently dressed, and carelessly leaning upon the elbow of her chair. For some time past the prince had never approached his wife so familiarly. Andrea, without seeming to observe his wife's involuntary look of aversion and terror, and throwing into his cold and regular features as much affection as he could, smilingly asked:

"Why are you making this fine rope, my dear and faithful wife?"

"To hang you with, my lord!" answered the queen, also smiling.

Andrea shrugged his shoulders, seeing nothing but a joke in this reply.

Then, seeing that Joan had again applied herself to her work, he attempted to renew the conversation.

" I confess," he continued, in a perfectly calm voice, " that my question was useless. I ought not to have doubted, from the hurry in which you are finishing your showy piece of work, that it is destined for some gallant cavalier, whom you mean to favour by allowing him to wear your colours, upon some perilous enterprise. In that case, my fair sovereign, I implore a command from your mouth ; name the time and place of the trial, and I am sure to carry away the prize from all your adorers."

" That is by no means certain," replied Joan, " if you are not more successful in war than in love." And she threw upon her husband a glance so contemptuous, that the young man coloured up to the eyes.

" I trust," continued Andrea, containing himself, " soon to give you such proofs of my affection, that you will no longer be able to doubt it."

" And what has given rise to your hope, my lord ? "

" I will tell you, if you will listen seriously."

" I do."

" Well then ! what has given me so great a confidence in the future is a dream, which I had last night."

" A dream ! that certainly deserves some explanation from you."

" I dreamt that there was a great fête in the town ; an immense crowd filled the streets like an overflowing torrent, and rent the sky with their shouts. The gloomy fronts of marble and granite had disappeared, concealed by silken hangings and garlands of flowers ; the churches were prepared, as for great solemnities. I was riding by your side. (Joan made a movement of disdain.) Pardon, madam, it was but a dream : I rode, then, upon your right hand, upon a noble white horse, richly caparisoned, and the chief judge of the kingdom carried before me an unfurled flag, as a mark of honour. After having triumphantly traversed the principal parts of the city, we arrived, to the sound of clarions and trumpets, at the royal church of Santa Chiara, in which your grandfather and my uncle are interred ; and there the pope's legate, after placing your hand in mine, pronounced a long discourse, and placed by turns the crowns of Jerusalem and Sicily upon our heads. The assembled nobles and people cried with one voice, ' Long live the King and Queen of Naples ! ' And in commemoration of so glorious a day, I conferred the honour of knighthood on some of the principal persons of the court."

" And have you no remembrance of the names of those chosen persons, whom you esteemed worthy of your royal favours ? "

" Perfectly, madam, perfectly : Bertrand of Artois—— "

" Enough, my lord ; I can dispense with the names of the rest. I have ever believed you to be a generous and honourable prince ; but you now give me new proofs, by letting your favours fall upon those persons whom I most honour with my confidence. I do not know whether your wishes are likely soon to be realized ; but whether or not, rely upon my eternal gratitude."

Joan's voice did not show the least emotion ; her look had become caressing, and a sweet smile played upon her lips. But from this moment Andrea's death was resolved upon in her heart. The prince, too much occupied in his own projects of revenge, and confiding in the potency of his talisman and his own courage, had no suspicion that his schemes would be prevented. He conversed with his wife for some time, in a tone of gay and friendly gossip, endeavouring to draw her secrets from her, and hinting at his own by interrupted sentences and mysterious concealment. When he thought that every mark of resentment had vanished from Joan's brow, he invited her and her suite to accompany him to a magnificent hunting party, which he was arranging for the 20th August; remarking, that the queen's consent would be to him the token of their complete reconciliation and oblivion of the past. Joan accepted the invitation with captivating grace, and the prince retired, perfectly satisfied with his interview, with the conviction, that he would but have to destroy the queen's favourites, to bring her to obedience, if not to renew her love.

But upon the eve of the 20th August, a strange and terrible scene took place within one of the lateral towers of the Castel-Nuovo. Charles of Duras, who had continued to brood over his infernal project, was informed by the notary, whom he had employed to watch the progress of the conspiracy, that upon that evening a definitive meeting was to take place. Shrouded in a black cloak, he entered a subterraneous corridor, and, hidden behind a pillar, waited the issue of the conference. After two hours of anxious expectation, in which every second was marked by the beatings of his heart, Charles thought that he heard the noise of a door opening with great precaution; a feeble ray of light, proceeding from a lamp, quivered upon the arches without dissipating the gloom, and a man walked towards him. Charles coughed slightly; it was the appointed signal. The man extinguished his light, and returned the dagger, which he had drawn, fearing a surprise, into its sheath.

"Is it you, Nicolas?" inquired the duke in a low voice.

"It is, my lord."

"Well?"

"The prince's death is decided to take place to-morrow, as he goes to the hunt."

"Did you recognise all the conspirators?"

"I did, although their features were hidden by masks; I knew them by their voices as they pronounced the vote of death."

"Can you point them out to me?"

"Certainly, they will pass the bottom of this corridor immediately: and hold, there is Tommaso Pace walking in front, to light their way."

As he spoke, a tall figure, black from head to foot, with his face carefully concealed by a velvet mask, carrying a torch in his hand, crossed the corridor, and paused upon the first step of a winding staircase leading to the upper stories. The conspirators slowly followed, two by two, like a procession of spectres, appearing for a moment in the luminous circle thrown out by the torch, and then disappeared in the darkness.

"There go Charles and Bertrand of Artois," said the notary; "there the Counts of Terlizzi and Cantanzaro; there the grand admiral and seneschal of the kingdom; Godefroi of Marsan, Count of Squillace, and Robert of Cabane, Count of Eboli. Those two women conversing together, with so much gesticulation, are Catherine of Tarento, Empress of Constantinople, and Filippa the Catanian, governess and first lady of the queen; there is Cancia, Joan's confidant, and there the Countess of Morcone,—"

The notary paused as a shadow glided past, walking alone, with eyes fixed upon the ground, arms hanging at her side, and stifling her sighs in the folds of her long black cloak.

"And who is this woman?" inquired the duke grasping his companion's arm.

"That woman!" murmured the notary, "it is the queen!"

"Ah! she is mine!" thought Charles, drawing a long breath, with the deep satisfaction which Satan may be supposed to feel, when a long-coveted soul at length falls into his power.

"And now, my lord," said Nicolas, when all had once more sunk into darkness and silence; "if you have commanded me to watch the proceedings of the conspirators, with the object of saving the young prince, whom you protect by your watchful friendship, hasten to do so, for to-morrow, perhaps, it will be too late."

"Follow me," cried the duke, in an imperious tone; "the time is come for you to know my real intentions, that you may obey them with the most scrupulous exactness."

So saying, he hurried away by the opposite side from that by which the conspirators had disappeared. The notary mechanically followed him through a maze of dark passages and concealed staircases, without being able to explain the sudden change which had taken place in his master's mind. As they were crossing one of the antechambers of the palace, they were met by Andrea, who accosted them gaily. The prince grasped his cousin of Duras by the hand, with his accustomed friendship.

"Well, duke, do you go a-hunting with us to-morrow?"

"Excuse me, my lord," answered Charles, with a deep obeisance; "it is utterly impossible for me to accompany you to-morrow, as my wife is very ill; but I beg you to accept my finest falcon."

And he gave the notary a look, which nailed him to the spot.

The morning of the 20th of August dawned, fair and serene. By break of day, masters and servants, knights and pages, princes and courtiers, were all on foot. The queen, on her appearance, was received on all sides with joyful cries. She was mounted upon a snow-white palfrey, and if she appeared paler than usual, it might be attributed to the early hour at which she had left her bed. Andrea, spurring forward one of the most fiery horses that he had ever subdued, cantered by his wife's side, happy in his strength, youth, and the thousand brilliant hopes which painted the future with the brightest colours. Never did the court of Naples display more splendour. All hate and mistrust seemed to have disappeared; and brother Robert himself, when he saw this joyful cavalcade passing beneath his window, cleared his gloomy brow, and stroked his beard with satisfaction.

Andrea's intention was to pass several days in hunting between Capua and Aversa, and not to return to Naples until all was ready for his coronation. Accordingly, upon the first day, they hunted near Melito. Towards evening the court stopped for the night at Aversa; and as the town at this time contained no building worthy of receiving the queen, her husband, and their numerous suite, the convent of Santo-Pietro-a-Majello, built by Charles II. in the year 1309, was converted into a royal residence.

Whilst the grand seneschal was giving orders for the immediate preparation of apartments and supper, for Andrea and his wife; the prince, who, during the day, had indulged in his favourite pastime with all the ardour of youth, mounted a terrace to breathe the evening air, accompanied by his nurse Isolda, who, loving him as a mother, was never separated from him. The prince had never before appeared so animated and cheerful; he extolled the beauty of the country, the ethereal blue of the sky, and the perfume of the plants; he overwhelmed his nurse with a thousand questions, without allowing her the trouble of answering them. He told her with enthusiasm, of a terrible wild boar, which he had that morning pursued through the woods, and stretched foaming at his feet. Isolda interrupted him to warn him, that there was a grain of dust in his eye. Andrea was forming brilliant projects for the future, and Isolda remarked tenderly, while caressing him, that he must be very much fatigued. Andrea good-naturedly scolded her for these continual interruptions; and then, allowing a tender melancholy to steal insensibly over him, he told a thousand stories, anecdotes of his infancy; spoke for a long time of his brother Louis, of his absent mother; and a tear rose to his eye, when he recalled her last farewell. Isolda heard him with joy, answered all his questions naturally; but her heart was agitated by no dark presentiments; for although the poor woman loved Andrea with her whole soul, still she was not his mother.

When all was ready, Robert of Cabane came to inform the prince that the queen expected him; Andrea cast one last look upon the smiling landscape, which night was rapidly covering beneath its sable veil, and after pressing his nurse's hand to his heart and lips, he slowly and sadly followed the grand seneschal. But, in a short time, the lights, illuminating the saloon, the rapid circulation of the wines, the cheerful conversation, and the exciting stories of the day's sport, dissipated the cloud of sadness which had settled upon the prince's brow. The queen alone, with her elbows leaning upon the table, her eyes fixed, her lips motionless, sat in the midst of this strange feast, cold and pale, like a spectre summoned from the tomb to disturb the joy of the guests. Andrea, whose reason began to yield to his copious libations of wine, took umbrage at his wife's face, filled a glass to the brim, and presented it to the queen. Joan trembled violently, and her lips moved with convulsive agitation; but the conspirators drowned by their loud voices the involuntary groan which burst from her breast. In the midst of the festivity, Robert of Cabane proposed that the same wines, which were used at the royal table, should be copiously distributed amongst the Hungarian soldiers who were guarding the avenues to the convent, and this extravagant proposition was received with drunken applause.

In a short time the shouts of the soldiers, by way of gratitude for such unexpected generosity, became mingled with the noise of the guests. To complete the prince's intoxication, there arose from all parts the cry of "Long live the queen!—long live his majesty, the king of Naples!"

These orgies were kept up during the greater part of the night. The guests spoke with enthusiasm of the pleasure they expected the next day, and Bertrand of Artois remarked, in an audible voice, that, after so late a carousal, it was probable that some of the party would not be ready at the appointed time. Andrea declared that, as for him, one or two hours repose was quite sufficient to dispel his fatigue, and that he fervently hoped that his example would be followed by the rest of the company. The Count of Terlizzi respectfully expressed some doubts as to the prince's punctuality. Andrea, after having challenged every body present to beat him if they could, retired with his wife to the apartments prepared for them, where he was soon buried in sleep. About two o'clock in the morning Tommaso Pace, the prince's valet and first groom of the chamber, knocked at his master's door, as if to call him to rise. At the first knock all remained silent; at the second, Joan, who during the whole night had not closed her eyes, made a movement, as if to save her husband, and to warn him of his danger; at the third, the unfortunate young man suddenly awoke. Hearing sounds like suppressed laughter in the next room, and believing that they were making a jest of his laziness, he leapt from his bed, and partially dressing himself in haste, opened the door. For what followed we shall quote literally the account given of the murder by Domenico Gravina, one of the most esteemed chroniclers of that period.

Immediately upon the prince's appearance the whole of the conspirators flew upon him, in order to strangle him with their hands—for he could not be slain by steel or poison, owing to the amulet which his poor mother had given him. But Andrea, being strong and active, and instantly understanding their infamous purpose, defended himself with supernatural vigour, and uttering horrible cries, he disengaged himself from the grasp of his murderers, his face bleeding and his hair torn out by the roots. The unfortunate young man endeavoured to regain his room, to arm himself, and resist his assassins to the last; but, when he had nearly reached the door, the notary, Nicolas de Melazzo, thrusting his dagger into the staples of the lock, in the manner of a bolt, prevented his entrance. The prince, imploring protection from those who remained faithful to him, returned to the saloon, but all the doors were locked, and no one held out a succouring hand. The queen remained silent, without showing any concern whatever. But Isolda, the nurse, alarmed by the cries of her dear son and master, leaped from her bed, and running to the window of her room, she filled the house with the most frightful screams. The traitors, terrified by the noise she made, although the place was isolated, and so completely separated from the town, that no one could come to his assistance, were disposed to let their victim go, when Bertrand d'Artois, feeling himself more guilty than the rest, excited by demoniacal fury, seized the prince round the body, and, after a desperate resistance, felled him to the ground; then, dragging him by the hair of the head to a balcony which looked out upon the gardens, and placing his knee upon his victim's breast—"This way, barons!" he cried, "I have got something to strangle him with!"—and, after a desperate struggle, he succeeded in passing a long rope, made of silk and gold, round the unfortunate man's neck. Drawing the knot tight, the other traitors threw him over the parapet of the balcony, and left him hanging between heaven and earth until death ensued. As the count of Terlizzi turned his eyes away from his expiring agonies, Robert of Cabane cried imperiously to him,—

"What are you doing there, my brother-in-law? the rope is long enough for us all to hold the end. We must have accomplices and not witnesses."

As soon as the last struggles of the dying man had ceased, they let the corpse fall to the ground, from the height of three stories, and opening the doors of the saloon, they went out as if nothing had happened.

Isolda, having at last procured a light, quickly ran up to the queen's apartment, and finding the door locked from within, she called her son loudly. There was no answer, although the queen was in the room. The poor nurse, frantic with fear and agitation, rushed through the passages, awoke the monks one by one, imploring them to assist her in seeking the
The monks answered, that they had indeed heard a noise, but,
at it proceeded from some quarrel among the drunken soldiery,
think it necessary to interfere. Isolda implored them still
stly; the alarm spread through the convent; the monks,

preceded by the nurse carrying a light, went in search of the cause of the disturbance. She entered the garden, observed something white among the bushes, advanced trembling towards it, uttered a dreadful scream, and sunk upon the ground. The unfortunate Andrea lay bathed in his blood, the rope round his neck, and his head crushed by the fall. Upon this discovery, two monks went up to the queen's apartment, and knocking respectfully at the door, inquired of her in a sepulchral voice,

"What does your majesty wish to have done with the corpse of your husband?"

The queen returned no answer; and the monks slowly descended to the garden, and kneeling down, one at the head and the other at the feet of the corpse, they commenced reciting the penitential psalms. When they had prayed an hour, two more monks went to Joan's room, and having repeated the same question with the same result, they took the place of the two former monks, and prayed in their turn. Finally a third couple presented themselves at the door, and returned in great consternation with the same success as the others. The people assembled round the convent, and cries and execrations began to proceed from the indignant multitude. The multitude increased in numbers and violence, and at last showed signs of attacking the royal residence; when suddenly the queen's guard appeared, with their lances in rest; and a litter carefully closed, and surrounded by the principal nobility of the court, passed through the amazed multitude. Joan, covered with a black veil, returned to the Castel Nuovo, surrounded by her escort; and from that time, say the historians, no one dared to speak of this murder.

But the terrible part which Charles of Duras had to play, commenced immediately upon the consummation of the crime. The duke permitted the corpse of the man, whom the pope had named King of Sicily and Jerusalem, to lie for two days exposed to the wind and rain, that the horrible sight might augment the indignation of the people. Upon the third day, he had it carried with the greatest pomp to the cathedral of Naples, and assembling all the Hungarians around the funeral bier, he cried in a voice of thunder:

"Nobles and Commoners, behold our king basely strangled by infamous traitors. God will sooner or later acquaint us with the names of all the culprits. Let those, then, who wish justice to be done, hold up their hands, swearing bloody, implacable, and eternal revenge against the accursed murderers."

There was one tremendous cry, which carried death and desolation into the hearts of the conspirators, and the people dispersed into the town, shouting, "Vengeance! vengeance!"

Divine justice, which knows no distinction of rank, and does not pause even before a crown, fell first upon Joan, in her love. When the guilty pair met for the first time after the murder, they were seized with mutual hatred and disgust. They recoiled in terror from each other; the queen saw before her only her husband's murderer; and Bertrand saw in the queen the cause of his crime, and perhaps of his future punishment. Bertrand's features were distorted, his cheeks sunk, his eyes surrounded by livid circles; his lips compressed, and his arms and hands extended towards his accomplice, in whom he imagined he saw a frightful vision. The same rope which he had used in strangling Andrea, he imagined was now around the queen's neck, and drawn so tightly that it entered her flesh; and some invisible power, some satanic inspiration urging him to strangle with his own hands the woman whom he had so desperately loved. The count rushed from the room with gestures of despair and inarticulate words: as he began to show symptoms of madness, his father, Charles d'Artois, hurried him away, and the same evening they set out for their estates of Santa Agatha, which they fortified in case of attack.

But Joan's slow and dreadful punishment was but commencing; a punishment which was to last for thirty-seven years, and then be terminated by a frightful death. One by one, the whole of the wretches who had had a hand in Andrea's death, presented themselves before her to demand the price of blood. The Catanian and her son, who now held in their hands not only the honour but also the life of their sovereign, redoubled their grasping audacity. Cancia set no bounds to her disorders; and the Empress of Constantinople demanded that her niece should marry her eldest son, Robert, Prince of Tarento. Joan, torn by remorse, devoured with indignation, humbled by the arrogance of her subjects, without courage to retaliate, and overcome by shame, descended to entreaties, and stooped so far as to ask a few days delay. The empress consented, upon condition that her son should take up his abode at the Castel Nuovo, and be permitted to see the queen once every day. Joan submitted in silence, and Robert of Tarento became an inmate of the palace.

Charles of Duras, on his part, being by the death of Andrea almost the head of the family, and, in the event of Joan dying without legitimate offspring, being by the old king's will, by right of his wife, Maria, heir to the throne, intimated two commands to the queen; in the first place, that she should contract no new marriage without first consulting him on the choice of the husband; and, secondly, that she should immediately invest him with the title of Duke of Calabria: and, to compel his cousin to this double sacrifice, he signified to her that if she were imprudent enough to refuse him either of his demands, he would place in the hands of justice the proofs of the crime and the names of the murderers.

Joan submitted to this new misfortune, seeing no means of avoiding it: but Catherine, who alone was capable of opposing her nephew, replied, that the ambition and the hopes of the Duke of Duras might be destroyed by representing to him at once—as was indeed the truth—that the queen was *enceinte;* and if, in spite of this intelligence, he still persisted in his schemes—in that case she would undertake to discover some means of sowing discord and trouble in her nephew's family, to wound him either in his affections or in his dearest interests, to dishonour him publicly in the persons of his wife and mother.

Charles smiled coldly when his aunt announced to him, on the part of the queen, that she was about to give birth to a child of Andrea's. Indeed what importance could an unborn child have in the eyes of a man who had rid himself with such admirable coolness, even by the hands of his enemies, of persons who had crossed him in his path? He answered, that the happy
ce which the empress had announced to him, far from diminishing
ence to his cousin, induced him, on the contrary, to show her
ness and attention; that, therefore, he would reiterate his pro-
d also renew his promise, if it was agreed to, not to pursue his
r the murder of his dear Andrea. He cunningly contrived to
herine of Tarento understand that she too, having had a hand

in the prince's death, it would be her own interest to advise the queen to prevent the proceedings which her refusal would occasion.

The empress was deeply affected by the threatening attitude assumed by her nephew, and promised him to do all in her power to persuade the queen to grant him what he demanded, upon condition that Charles should give her the necessary time to conduct so delicate a negotiation. But Catherine profited by the delay, which she had drawn from the Duke of Duras's ambition, to meditate her revenge and assure herself of certain success. After several plans, eagerly thought of and reluctantly abandoned, she resolved upon such an infernal and unheard-of project, that the mind would refuse to believe its truth if it were not attested by all the historians. Agnes of Duras had been suffering for some days past from a mysterious languor, probably occasioned, in some degree, by her son's restless and turbulent disposition. It was upon this unfortunate mother that the empress resolved to deal the first strokes of her hatred. She held counsel with the Count of Terlizzi and his mistress, Cancia, which last-mentioned person, by order of the queen, attended Agnes during her illness; and it was resolved that hints should be thrown out to Charles of Duras, accusing his mother of being with child. Count Terlizzi, who, since the part he had taken in the regicide, trembled in case he should be denounced, made no opposition to the wishes of the empress; and Cancia, whose head was as light as her heart was depraved, caught with foolish gaiety at the opportunity of revenging herself upon the prudery of a princess of the blood, who alone remained virtuous in the midst of a general dissoluteness. Assured of the consent and discretion of her accomplices, Catherine began to circulate vague reports, but which, if confirmed by proof, were of dreadful importance; and in a short time the perfidious accusation, whispered from ear to ear, reached that of Charles of Duras.

Seized with convulsive trembling when this shocking intelligence was first made known to him, the duke immediately summoned the physician of the household, and demanded sternly what was the cause of his mother's illness. The physician (who had been practised upon by the most detestable means, until he himself was convinced of the truth of the accusation) turned pale and hesitated; but, upon being pressed by Charles's threats, he confessed that he had sufficient grounds of suspicion to believe the duchess to be with child; but that, as he might possibly be mistaken, before deciding upon so grave a question, he asked leave to make a second observation. The next day, immediately upon the physician coming from Agnes's apartment, he was met by the duke, who, after having questioned him by an agonized gesture, understood, by the dead silence which followed, that his fears were too well grounded. But the physician, anxious to proceed with caution, requested leave to make one more observation. On the third day the doctor affirmed, upon his soul and conscience, that Agnes of Duras was with child.

"It is well," said Charles, dismissing the physician, without showing any emotion.

The same evening, a medicine, which the physician had ordered, was taken by the duchess, and in the course of half an hour she was attacked by the most violent pains. The duke was informed of her illness, that other advice might be taken, as the prescription of the usual physician, instead of easing the patient, had only increased her illness.

Charles slowly ascended to his mother's apartment, and sending away all the persons round the bedside, pretending that by their awkwardness they only increased the patient's sufferings, he was left alone with her. Poor Agnes, forgetting the tortures she was suffering, grasped his hand tenderly, and smiled through her tears.

Charles, his forehead bathed with a cold sweat, his face of a livid colour, and his eyeballs fearfully dilated, bent over the sick woman, and inquired of her in a gloomy voice,

" Well, my mother, do you feel any better?"

" Oh! my poor Charles, I suffer! I suffer fearfully! I feel as though my veins were running with molten lead. Oh my son! send for your brothers, that I may give them my last blessing, for I cannot much longer endure this agony. I burn; oh for pity's sake, send for a physician; I am poisoned."

Charles did not move.

" Some water!" continued the dying woman, in an interrupted voice, " some water! a physician! a confessor! my children, I would see my children!"

Charles remained motionless, in gloomy silence, and his mother, in the midst of her sufferings, believing that grief had deprived her son of the powers of speech and motion, raised herself by a desperate effort, and holding him by the arm, she cried with all her remaining strength, " Charles, my son! what ails you? Compose yourself, poor child; this will be nothing, at least I trust so; but quick, send for assistance, summon my physician. Oh! you can form no conception of what I suffer."

" Your physician," answered Charles, in a slow and cold voice, each word of which pierced to his mother's soul, like the stroke of a dagger, " your physician cannot come."

" And why?"

" Because he who possesses the secret of our honour, cannot live."

" Wretch!" cried the dying woman, in the height of terror and pain, " you have murdered him! you have perhaps poisoned your mother! O Charles! Charles! God have mercy upon your soul."

" It is you who have compelled me," answered Charles in a deep voice; " it is you who have urged me on to crime and despair; it is you who are the cause of my dishonour in this world, and of my perdition in the next."

" What mean you? in pity, Charles, do not let me die in this fearful uncertainty; what fatal mistake is blinding you? Speak, speak, my son; I do not now feel the poison which is destroying me; what have I done? of what am I accused?"

And she cast upon her son, a haggard look, in which maternal love still struggled against the dreadful thought that she saw her murderer: then, seeing that Charles remained mute, in spite of her entreaties, she repeated with a piercing shriek:

" Speak! in heaven's name, speak, before I die!"

" Mother, you are with child!"

" I," cried Agnes in tones that went to his heart, " God, pardon him! as his dying mother pardons and blesses him."

Charles fell upon her neck, shouting for help, in a despairing voice: he would now have saved her life at the price of his own; but it was too late. He uttered one thrilling cry, and was found stretched upon his mother's corpse.

Strange commentaries were raised at the court upon the death of the Duchess of Duras, and the disappearance of her physician; and no one could avoid noticing the increased melancholy which deepened the furrows upon Charles's gloomy brow. Catherine alone guessed the terrible cause of her nephew's melancholy; for it was evident to her, that at one blow the duke had murdered his physician, and poisoned his mother. But she had not expected so sudden and violent a reaction in the heart of a man who would not recoil from any crime. She believed Charles capable of every thing excepting remorse. This settled sadness seemed to her to be a bad omen for the success of her schemes. She had wished to raise domestic troubles in her nephew's breast, that he might not have the time to set himself in opposition to her son's marriage with the queen; but she had overshot her mark; and Charles being by one terrible step fairly entered upon the path of crime, having dashed to pieces the holiest affections, threw himself back upon his evil passions, with feverish ardour and an eager thirst for revenge.

Catherine then endeavoured to gain her object by submission. She made her son understand, that the only means by which he could still obtain the queen's hand, was to flatter Charles's ambition, and to put himself, after a manner, under his patronage. Robert of Tarento saw his position and ceased paying his court to Joan, who received his addresses with coldness, to attach himself to his cousin. He showed him all the deference and respect which Charles himself had formerly pretended for Andrea, when he had first thought of his destruction. But the Duke of Duras was not to be duped by sentiments of friendship and devotion from the eldest of the house of Tarento; and while showing himself moved by so unexpected a return, he kept himself carefully on his guard against Robert's solicitations.

But an event, beyond all human foresight, completely overthrew the calculations of the two cousins. One day, as they were riding out together on horseback, their usual custom since their hypocritical reconciliation, Louis of Tarento, Robert's youngest brother, who had always loved Joan with artless and chivalrous affection, and who, keeping himself aloof from his family's infamous conspiracy, had not stained his hands with Andrea's blood, transported by some strange frenzy, presented himself suddenly at the gates of the Castel-Nuovo; and while his brother was wasting his precious moments in obtaining the consent to his marriage, he ordered the drawbridge to be raised, and commanded the soldiers to open to no one. Then, without troubling himself for an instant with Charles's rage or Robert's jealousy, he rushed into the queen's apartment. Returning from his ride, Robert of Tarento was astonished to find that the bridge was not lowered to admit him. He called loudly for the soldiers who guarded the fortress, threatening them with severe punishments for their unpardonable negligence; but finding that the gates remained closed, and that the soldiers showed no signs of repentance or fear, the prince got into a furious rage, swearing he would hang the wretches like dogs, who dared to prevent his entrance into his own residence. The Empress of Constantinople, terrified at the prospect of the bloody quarrel, which she saw would inevitably ensue between the two brothers, advanced alone and on foot to her son, and using her maternal ascendancy, after entreating him to repress his fury in the presence of the crowd, which had already collected to witness the strange sight, related to him, in a low voice, all that had taken place during his absence. Robert burst into a fit of frantic rage; and, having exhausted himself in curses and imprecations on his brother's head, galloped furiously from the gate, to inform the Duke of Duras, whom he had just left, of the outrage, and to excite him to revenge.

Charles was conversing carelessly with his young wife, who was little accustomed to such familiarity, when the Prince of Tarento, breathless with haste and agitation, burst into the room, to tell his incredible tale. Charles made him repeat it twice over, as he could not believe in the possibility of so audacious an enterprise. Passing suddenly from doubt to rage, and striking his forehead with his iron gauntlet, he cried, that since the queen set him at defiance, he would soon make her tremble in her own palace and in her lover's arms; and, casting a frowning glance at Maria, who was imploring him with tears for her sister, he grasped Robert's hand, and promised that so long as he lived, Louis should never be Joan's husband.

The same evening he shut himself up in his cabinet, and despatched letters to the court of Avignon, the results of which were not long in manifesting themselves. A bull, dated the 2nd of June, 1346, was addressed to Bertram des Baux, Count of Monte-Scaglioso, chief judge of the kingdom of Sicily, with orders to commence the most rigorous proceedings against Andrea's murderers, and to visit them with the severest punishment. Nevertheless, a secret note was attached to this bull, which was in direct contradiction to Charles's schemes; the sovereign pontiff expressly commanding the chief judge not to implicate the queen or the princes of the blood in the proceedings, as such a step would give rise to great troubles; reserving to himself, in his character of supreme head of the church and superior of the kingdom, the right of trying them at such time as his prudence should think fit.

Bertram des Baux made solemn preparations for this terrible trial. A platform was erected in the great hall of justice, and all the officers of the crown, and the dignitaries of the state, had seats behind the bench appropriated to the judges. Three days after the publication of Clement IV.'s bull in the capital, the chief judge was prepared to commence the public examination of two of the accused. The two culprits, who had first fallen into the hands of the law, were, as may easily be imagined, those whose condition was the least elevated, and whose lives were of the smallest value, Tommaso Pace and Nicolas de Melazzo. They were brought before the tribunal, to be, according to custom, previously put to torture. As they were conducted under a guard to the court, the notary passed by Charles's side in the street, and had time to whisper to him—

"My lord, the hour is come to render my life for you; I shall do my duty; I leave my wife and children to your care."

And, encouraged by a nod from his protector, he walked on with a firm step, and deliberate air.

The chief judge, after proving the identity of the accused, delivered them over to the executioner and his assistants, to be tortured in the public square, as a sight as well as an example to the multitude. But one of the accused, Tommaso Pace, upon being fastened to the fatal rope, declared, to the great disappointment of the crowd, that he would confess all, and demanded to be once more taken before the judges. At these words, the Count de Terlizzi, who was watching with mortal anxiety the slightest gestures of the prisoners, made a desperate attempt to save himself from the dreaded disclosure. As Tommaso Pace, his hands bound behind his back, escorted by two guards, and followed by the notary, was led back to the hall of justice, the count, by using the authority of his rank, had him taken into a solitary house, and grasping him strongly by the throat until his tongue protruded from his mouth, he cut it off with a razor.

The shrieks of the unfortunate man, thus cruelly mutilated, reached the ear of the Duke of Duras; he entered the room in which this barbarous deed had been done, and from which the Count of Terlizzi was at that moment departing, and approached the notary, who without showing the slightest signs of emotion or fear, had been the spectator of this frightful sight. Nicolas de Melazzo, believing that the same fate was reserved for him, turned calmly towards the duke, and said to him, with a melancholy smile,

"My lord, the precaution is useless; you will have no need of depriving me of my tongue, as the noble count has done to my poor comrade. They may tear my flesh to pieces, without drawing a single word from my mouth. I have promised you, my lord, and you have, as guarantees of its fulfilment, the life of my wife, and the fortunes of my children."

"It is not silence I require of you," answered the duke, in a deep voice; "on the contrary, you may rid me of all my enemies at once by your revelations, and I command you to denounce them to the tribunal."

The notary bent his head with melancholy resignation; then starting suddenly in great terror, he made a step towards the duke, and murmured in a stifled voice,

"And the queen?"

"They would not believe you, if you dared to denounce her; but when Filippa and her son, when Terlizzi and his wife, when those who are most familiar with her are accused by you, and put to the torture, they will denounce her unanimously."

"I understand you, my lord; my life alone does not content you, you must also have my soul. It is well; once again I recommend my children to you."

And he walked towards the tribunal with a deep sigh. The chief judge put the usual questions to Tommaso Pace; and a shudder of horror ran through the assembly, at the despairing gesture made by the wretched man as he opened his bleeding mouth. But astonishment and terror was at its height, when Nicolas de Melazzo, in a slow and firm voice, named, one after the other, Andrea's murderers, with the exception of the queen and the princes of the blood, and gave a minute account of the assassination in all its details.

Robert of Cabane and the counts of Terlizzi and Morcome, who were in the hall, and who dared not make the slightest defence, were immediately arrested. A short time afterwards Filippa, her two daughters, and Cancia, joined them in prison, after vainly imploring the protection of the queen. As to Charles and Bertrand of Artois, shut up in their fortress of Santa Agatha, they set the law at defiance. Besides these, several other conspirators, among whom were the Counts of Mileto and Catanzero, escaped by flight.

Immediately upon Nicolas declaring that he had nothing more to confess, and that he had told the tribunal the exact and entire truth, the chief judge immediately pronounced his sentence, in the midst of the deepest silence. Tommaso Pace and the notary were each fastened to a horse's tail, and after being dragged in this manner through the principal streets of the town, they were hung upon the gallows.

The other prisoners were thrown into a dungeon, to be interrogated and tortured upon the following day, and as they were all confined in the same place, they began to exchange mutual reproaches, each pretending to have been seduced to the crime by the rest. Cancia alone, whose strange spirit was not depressed, even by the prospect of torture or death, interrupted the complaints of her companions, by a startling burst of laughter, and cried gaily—

"Why such bitter recriminations and discourteous contradictions, my friends? we have no possible excuse, and we are all equally guilty. As for me, who am the youngest of you all, and if these ladies will allow me to say so, not the ugliest, if I am condemned I shall die contented, and you had much better do the same. Let us have no more complaints and lamentations, which are really very tiresome, and let us prepare to die as joyously as we have lived."

So saying, she yawned carelessly, and throwing herself upon the straw, slept as calmly as if she had been innocent and happy.

Next morning by daybreak, an immense crowd assembled upon the sea shore. A palisade had been erected during the night, to keep the people at such a distance that they might see the criminals without hearing them. Charles of Duras at the head of a brilliant retinue of knights and attendants, mounted upon a superb horse, and dressed in deep mourning, took his station close to the enclosure. His face glowed with ferocious joy, when the criminals two by two, with their wrists bound together, passed through the crowd; for the duke expected every moment to hear them denounce the queen. But the chief judge had prudently prevented any indiscretion of this kind, by running a fish-hook through their tongues. The wretches were tortured upon the mast of a galley, without a single word of confession escaping them. Joan, notwithstanding the injuries which most of her accomplices had done her, feeling her pity awakened for the woman whom she had respected as a mother, for the companions of her infancy, and perhaps some lingering love for Robert de Cabane, sent two messengers to Bertrand de Baux, to implore him to pardon the culprits; but the chief judge seized upon the queen's envoys, put them to the torture, and, upon their confessing that they had taken part like the rest, in Andrea's murder, condemned them to the same punishment as the others. Donna Cancia alone, on account of her condition, escaped the torture, and the execution of her sentence was deferred.

As she was returning to prison, smiling upon the handsomest cavaliers she could distinguish in the crowd, she passed Charles of Duras, and as her tongue had not been pierced like the rest, she beckoned him to approach her, and said to him in a low voice. [illegible]

Charles grew pale, and laying his hand upon his sword, he cried fiercely—

"Wretch!"

"You forget, my lord, that I am under the protection of the law."

"Ah, [illegible] my poor mother!" murmured Charles in a stifled voice, and [illegible] to the ground.

On the following day the people, assembled earlier than before, demanded their [illegible] with loud cries. All the regular troops, of which the judicial authorities had the disposal, were posted in the streets, to stem the torrent. The instinct of innate cruelty which too often degrades human nature was fully aroused in the populace, the blindness of hatred, and the sight of blood, had driven them to frenzy; groups of men and women, howling like wild beasts, threatened to pull down the prison walls, if the criminals were not brought out to punishment; and one continued roar, like the growling of thunder, struck terror into the queen's heart.

But, notwithstanding Bertram de Baux's good will to comply with the popular wishes, the preparations for this dreadful execution were not concluded until almost noon, when the sun was shining upon the town with insupportable heat. An enormous cry, proceeding from ten thousand panting breasts, was raised, when the rumour spread through the crowd that the condemned were about to be brought to punishment, which instantly sunk into silence as the gates of the prison slowly turned upon their rusty hinges. A treble rank of horsemen, with visors down and lances in rest, headed the procession; after which, in the midst of howling and curses, the condemned were brought out, each extended upon a cart, bound, and naked to the waist, between two executioners, whose duty it was to torture them on the way. In the first cart lay the old Catanian washerwoman, afterwards grand seneschal and governess of the queen, Filippa de Cabane; and the two executioners, who were placed at her right and left, were lashing her with so much fury that her blood left a long trace in all the streets through which they passed.

Immediately after their mother followed, in separate carts, the Countesses of Terlizzi and Morcome, the eldest of whom was but nineteen years of age. These two sisters were so beautiful, that a cry of astonishment was raised by the multitude, who gloated with brutal eyes on the sight of barbarities too horrible for description.

Robert of Cabane, grand seneschal of the kingdom, the Counts of Terlizzi and Morcome, Raymond Pace, the brother of the valet who had been executed two days before, and several other prisoners, followed in the same manner, in carts, while they were likewise scourged with cords, flayed with razors, and torn with red-hot pincers.

In the middle of the square of Saint-Eligio an immense pile had been raised, to which the victims were carried; and what remained of their mutilated bodies were cast into the flames. The Count of Terlizzi and the Catanian still lived, and tears rolled from the unfortunate mother's eyes when she saw the body of her son and palpitating remains of her two daughters cast into the flames, and knew from their frightful cries that their sufferings were not over. Suddenly a tremendous noise drowned the groans of the victims; the enclosure was forced, and the palisades thrown down by the mob, who, rushing like maniacs to the gibbet, armed with swords, hatchets, and knives, drew from the flames the dead or living bodies of the condemned, hacked them to pieces, and carried away their bones, in memory of that fearful day.

The sight of these dreadful punishments had not satisfied Charles of Duras's vengeance. Seconded by the chief judge, he every day caused new executions, and in a short time Andrea's death was but a pretext to exterminate, legally, all persons who opposed his designs. But Louis of Tarento, who was now soliciting the necessary dispensations to legitimize his marriage, regarding these acts of high jurisdiction in the light of personal affronts to the queen, and exercised against her will and in direct violation of her rights, armed his adherents, and, increasing his band with all the adventurers who would join his standard, he was soon at the head of a force sufficient to defend his party and resist the encroachments of his cousin. Naples was now divided into two hostile camps, who came to blows with each other upon the slightest pretence; and these daily skirmishes were always followed by some scene of death or pillage.

But in order to supply the wants of these mercenary soldiers, and to keep up the intestine struggle with the Duke of Duras and his brother Robert, Louis of Tarento was in want of money, and he discovered that the queen's coffers were empty. Joan relapsed into despair, and her lover, generous and brave as he was, was compelled to comfort her as well as he could, without well knowing himself how to surmount this difficulty. But his mother, Catherine, whose ambition was satisfied with seeing one of her sons, no matter which, upon the throne of Naples, came unexpectedly to their assistance, and promised solemnly within a few days to put her neice into possession of a treasure which, queen as she was, she had never even dreamt of.

The empress, taking with her the half of her son's troops, marched upon Santa-Agatha, and laid siege to the fortress in which Charles and Bertrand d'Artois had taken refuge to avoid the pursuit of justice. The old count, thunderstruck at the approach of this woman, who had been the soul of the conspiracy, and unable to understand the meaning of her hostile march, sent messengers to her to inquire, in his name, the meaning of this display of military force. Catherine replied in the following words, which we translate literally: "My dear friends, carry back to Charles, our faithful ally, the message, that we desire to speak with him privately upon a matter of equal interest to us both, and that he need feel no alarm at seeing us arrive in arms, for this has been purposely done, for a reason, which we will explain to him at our meeting. We are aware that he is confined to his bed with the gout: we are not, therefore, surprised that he cannot come to meet us. Hasten then to salute him from us, and tell him, that if such is his good pleasure, we request leave to enter his territory, accompanied by Messire Nicholas Acciajuoli, our ordinary councillor, and only ten of our soldiers, to converse with him upon an important subject, which cannot be trusted to messengers."

Recovered from his surprise, after such frank and friendly explanations, Charles of Artois sent his son Bertrand to meet the empress, to receive her with all the respect due to her rank, and her high position at the Neapolitan court. Catherine entered the castle with marks of sincere pleasure, and after inquiring after the count's health, apparently with the most cordial friendship, being left alone with him, lowering her voice with a mysterious air, she explained to him, that the object of her visit was to consult his experience upon the affairs of Naples, and to solicit his active co-operation in favour of the queen; but as nothing of importance obliged her to quit Santa-Agatha, she would await the re-establishment of the count's health, to profit by his advice, and to acquaint him with the events which had taken place since his absence from the court. She at length succeeded so well in gaining the confidence, and dissipating the suspicions of the old man, that he begged her to honour his castle with her presence, as long as her affairs would permit her, and received by degrees the whole troop, which had accompanied her, within his walls. This was what Catherine had been waiting for: the same day on which her whole force was admitted into Santa-Agatha, she entered the count's room with an angry air, followed by four soldiers, and seizing the old man by the throat—

"Wretched traitor!" she cried in a severe voice, "think not to escape from our hands until you have received the chastisement which you deserve. Instantly point out to me the place where your treasure is concealed, if you do not wish your wretched body to be thrown to feed the ravens."

The count, almost choked, and with a dagger glittering at his breast, did not even endeavour to cry for aid. He fell upon his knees, and implored the empress at least to spare his son's life, who was not yet recovered from the gloomy melancholy which had disturbed his reason ever since the horrible catastrophe; and dragging himself reluctantly to the place where his treasure was concealed, he pointed it out to the empress, repeating, with tears and sighs,—

"Take every thing—my wealth and my life, but save my son!"

Catherine could not conceal her joy at seeing before her, vases of exquisite workmanship and prodigious value, caskets of pearls, diamonds and rubies of inestimable worth, and coffers filled with ingots of gold. But when the old man, in a trembling voice, insisted upon obtaining his son's liberty as a recompense for his life and fortune, the empress, resuming her pitiless coldness, replied sternly—

"I have already given orders to have your son brought before me: but prepare yourself to bid him farewell for ever, for he is about to be taken to the fortress of Melfi, and you, in all probability, will end your days in the dungeons of the castle of Santa-Agatha." Such was the poor count's grief at this violent separation from his son, that a few days afterwards he was found dead in his dungeon. As to Bertrand, he did not survive him long. Completely losing his reason, upon the intelligence of his father's death, he hung himself from his prison bars. Thus did Andrea's murderers destroy each other, like beasts of prey enclosed in the same cage.

Catherine of Tarento, carrying with her the treasure which she had thus honourably obtained, arrived at the court of Naples in great triumph, and meditating vast schemes. But new misfortunes had taken place during her absence. Charles of Duras, after having summoned the queen, for the last time, to give him up the duchy of Calabria, a title which belonged to the heir-apparent to the throne, enraged at her refusal, wrote to Louis of Hungary, inviting him to take possession of the kingdom, engaging himself to assist him in the enterprise with all his forces, and to give him up the principal authors of his brother's death, who hitherto had escaped the hands of justice. The King of Hungary eagerly accepted this offer, and raised an army to avenge Andrea's death, and march to the conquest of Naples. His mother's tears and the counsels of brother Robert, who had taken refuge at Buda, confirmed him in his projects of revenge. He had already complained bitterly to the court of Avignon, that after having punished the minor assassins, they had allowed the principal culprit to continue in security, who, already stained with her husband's blood, continued her debauched and adulterous life. The pope replied, that as far as the matter depended upon him, he would not have failed to give satisfaction to legitimate complaints; but that the accusation must in the first place be clearly drawn up and supported by proper evidence; that undoubtedly Joan's conduct had been highly blamable, during and after her husband's death; but that his majesty ought to consider that the church of Rome, seeking above all things for truth and justice, always acted with the greatest circumspection; and that, especially in a matter of such deep importance, it was impossible for it to judge merely by appearances.

Joan, upon her part, terrified by these warlike preparations, despatched ambassadors to the Florentine republic, to justify herself from the crime imputed to her by public opinion, and even venture to endeavour to excuse herself to the Hungarian court; but Andrea's brother replied by a letter of ominous brevity: "Your previous disorderly life, the exclusive power which you arrogated to yourself in the kingdom, your total neglect avenging yourself upon your husband's murderers, the other husband whom you have married, and your excuse itself, are sufficient proofs of your having been an accomplice in your husband's murder."

Catherine did not suffer herself to be discouraged by Louis of Hungary's threats, and viewing her son's position with that clearness of observation which never failed her, she saw that their only means of safety was to effect their reconciliation with their mortal enemy Charles, by granting him all that he demanded. She calculated upon two things, that he would assist them in repulsing the King of Hungary, and afterwards when the most pressing danger had been overcome; and if they failed, they would at least have the satisfaction of dragging him with them in their fall. The agreement was concluded in the gardens of the Castel-Nuovo, whither Charles repaired upon the invitation of the queen and his aunt. Joan granted to her cousin the long-wished for title of Duke of Calabria. Charles, declared by this act heir to the kingdom, instantly marched upon Aquila, who had already raised the Hungarian standard. He was not aware that he was rushing upon his ruin.

When the Empress of Constantinople saw this man, whom of all others she most detested, gaily setting off upon this expedition, she looked after him with a gloomy air; guessing by female instinct, that his destruction was approaching. Having now no more treason to perpetrate, or revenge to consummate upon the earth, she was attacked by some unknown malady, and suddenly expired without uttering one complaint, or exciting one regret.

CHAPTER III.

The King of Hungary having passed through Italy, entered the kingdom at the head of a formidable army. He received on his journey marks of interest and sympathy; the state of Verona, to prove the sincerity of their wishes for the success of his enterprise, had given him the assistance of three hundred horsemen. The news of the arrival of the Hungarians threw the Neapolitan court into an indescribable state of alarm. It had been hoped that the king's march would have been stopped by the pope's legate, who was obliged to forbid him in the name of the holy father, and under pain of excommunication, from passing without the consent of the holy see; but Louis had simply replied to the pope's legate, that when he was master of Naples he would consider himself as the vassal of the church, but that [illegible] he would answer only to God and his conscience. [illegible] into the heart of the [illegible] had been taken to oppose them. [illegible] who remained faithful to her [illegible] Louis of Tarentum, whom she [illegible] tears from her faithful [illegible] the night in a Provençal [illegible] Louis of Tarentum, following the dictates of his [illegible] Naples, at the head of three [illegible] soldiers, and encamped upon the banks of the Volturno, to dispute the passage with the hostile army ; but the king of Hungary had foreseen this plan, and while his adversary was awaiting him at Capua, he arrived at Benevento, and on the same day he received the Neapolitan ambassadors, who, after congratulating him upon his entry, presented him with the keys of the city, and swore obedience to him as the lawful successor of Charles of Anjou. The news of the surrender of Naples was soon spread through the queen's camp, and all the princes of the blood and the leaders of the army abandoned Louis of Tarento, and took refuge in the capital; Louis, accompanied by his ordinary councillor, Nicholas Acciajuoli, returned to Naples the same evening. All hope was now hourly disappearing; his brothers and cousins implored him instantly to fly, to avert the vengeance of the king from falling upon the whole town; unfortunately however, there was no ship in the port in a fit state to set sail. The terror of the princes had now reached its height; but Louis confiding in his usual good fortune, accompanied by the brave Acciajuoli, threw himself into an open boat, and commanding four sailors to row with all their strength, in a few minutes he had disappeared, leaving his family in great consternation, until intelligence was brought them that he had gained Pisa, and had gone to rejoin the queen in Provence.

Charles of Duras and Robert of Tarento, the eldest members of the two royal branches, upon being hastily consulted, decided upon softening the rage of the Hungarian monarch, by the most complete submission; and leaving their youngest brothers at Naples, they hastily set out for Aversa, where the king had established himself.

Louis received them with marks of friendship, and inquired of them, with interest, why their brothers had not accompanied them ; to which the princes replied, that their brothers remained at Naples to prepare a reception worthy of his majesty. Louis thanked them for their kind intentions ; but at the same time begged them to invite the young princes to approach him, averring that his entry into Naples would be infinitely more agreeable to him, if surrounded by the whole of his family, and that he longed ardently to embrace his young cousins. Charles and Robert, conforming to the king's wishes, immediately sent to summon their brothers to Aversa ; but Louis of Duras, the eldest of the children, entreated the rest with many tears not to obey this command, and sent back a message that a violent headach prevented him from leaving Naples. So childish an excuse could not fail to irritate Charles, and upon the same day, a formal order, which admitted no delay, obliged the unfortunate children to appear before the monarch. Louis of Hungary embraced them, one after the other with cordiality, put several questions to them in an affectionate manner, kept them to sup with him, and did not dismiss them until late in the night.

Immediately upon the Duke of Duras retiring into his apartment, Lello de l'Aquila and the Count of Fondi glided mysteriously to his bedside, and, after assuring themselves that no one was within hearing, warned him that the king, at a council held that morning, had decided upon his death, and at the same time to deprive his cousins of liberty. Charles listened until they had finished with an incredulous air, and suspecting some treason, answered coldly that he had too much confidence in his cousin's good faith, to listen for a moment to so gross a calumny. Lello insisted upon his veracity, and implored the duke, in the name of those who were most dear to him, to listen to their advice ; but the duke, growing impatient, commanded them sternly to leave the room.

The next day was marked by the same kind reception from the king, the same caresses to the children, and the same invitation to supper. The banquet was magnificent, the hall blazed with light, golden vases were spread upon the table, beautiful flowers scattered their perfume, the rarest wines were served in abundance. The conversation was animated, and joy sparkled on every countenance.

Charles of Duras supped with the king at a separate table, surrounded by his brothers. By degrees his look became fixed and his brow thoughtful. He remembered that in that same hall Andrea had supped on the evening of his murder, and that of all those who had contributed to his death, some had expired in torments, others were still languishing in prison; the queen was exiled and a fugitive, compelled to implore the compassion of strangers; of all the actors in the murder he alone was free. This thought struck him with sudden terror. He applauded himself, however, for the profound tact with which he had conducted his infernal plot; and throwing off his gloomy air, he smiled with an expression of secret pride. He little knew that at that moment God's justice was hanging over his head. Lello de l'Aquila, who was waiting at table, coming close to his ear, whispered gloomily, "My lord, my lord, why will you not believe me? Fly, there is yet time."

Charles, enraged at this man's obstinacy, threatened that if he added another word, he would repeat what he had said to the king.

"I have done my duty," murmured Lello, bowing his head; "God must dispose of you as he wills."

As he spoke these words, the king rose, and upon the duke approaching him to take leave, suddenly changing the expression of his face, he cried in a terrible voice:

"Traitor! you are at last in my hands, you shall die as you have deserved; but before you are given over to the executioner, confess with your own lips the treasons which you have practised against our royal majesty, although there is no want of evidence to condemn you to a punishment proportionate to your crimes. Therefore, Duke of Duras, tell me at once, did you not by your infamous manœuvres, by the assistance of your uncle, the cardinal of Perigord, prevent my brother's coronation, by which means, being deprived of all royal authority, he was brought to his miserable end? Oh! do not endeavour to deny it. Here is the letter, sealed with your own seal: you wrote it in secret, but it accuses you in public. Did you not, after having drawn us hither to avenge our brother's death, a death of which you were the instigator, suddenly return to the queen's party, and marching against our city of Aquila, had you not the audacity to raise an army against our faithful subjects? You hoped, traitor, to use us as a footstool, by which you might ascend to the throne, after ridding yourself of all your rivals. You were but waiting our departure, to murder the lieutenant, whom we would have left in our place, and then to seize upon the kingdom. But in this your foresight has failed you. There is yet another crime, which surpasses all the rest, the crime of high treason, and which I will punish without mercy. You carried off the wife whom Robert by his will, of which you were cognizant, had destined for ourself. Answer, wretch, what excuse have you for the abduction of the Princess Maria?"

Rage had so completely changed Louis's voice, that these last words resembled more the howling of a wild beast than any human sounds: his eyes flashed with fearful light, his lips were pale and trembling. Charles and his brothers fell upon their knees, struck with mortal terror, and the unfortunate duke twice endeavoured to speak; but his teeth chattered, and he could not articulate a sound. Looking round him, and seeing his poor innocent brothers on the eve of ruin through his fault, he summoned a little courage, and, addressing the king,

"Sire," said he, "the terrible look you bend upon me makes me tremble, as you see. But I implore you for pity upon my knees; for God is my witness, that I did not summon you into the kingdom with any culpable intention; but my constant and sincere desire has been to place it under your dominion. I am certain that some perfidious counsellors have drawn upon me your hatred. If it is true that I appeared armed at Aquila, as you accuse me of having done, it was because I was compelled to do so by Queen Joan; but as soon as I learnt your arrival at Fermo, I retired with my troops. I trust, then, in the name of Jesus Christ, that you will pardon and have mercy upon me, for the sake of my old services and my tried fidelity. But I will be silent, as I see you are irritated, and wait until your anger has passed. Once again, my liege, have compassion upon us, as we are in your majesty's hands."

The king coldly averted his head, and delivered the prisoners to the custody of Stephen Vayvoda and the Count of Zomic, who guarded them during the night in a room adjoining the king's apartment. Upon the following day, Louis, after another council had been held, commanded that Charles of Duras should be strangled at the same place where poor Andrea's death had been effected; and sent the other princes of the blood in chains to Hungary, where they were long detained prisoners. Charles, stunned by so unexpected a misfortune, borne down by the memory of his crimes, basely trembling at the prospect of death, remained in a state of stupefaction. Upon his knees, with his face hidden in his hands, and uttering convulsive groans, he endeavoured to collect his thoughts, which seemed like the wanderings of some hideous dream. The darkness of night was upon his soul, and from his deep despair there arose bright figures, who railed at him as they flew away. Voices from the other world rang in his ears; and a long procession of phantoms glided before his eyes, as upon that day when Nicolas de Melazzo pointed out to him the conspirators in the vaults of the Castel-Nuovo: but now the spectres held their bleeding heads in their hands, and, waving them about by the hair, spirted drops of blood upon him. Others brandished razors—and all appeared threatening to smite him with the instruments of their own punishment. Pursued by this infernal crew, the wretched man opened his mouth to give a cry of agony, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and no sound escaped his lips. Now he beheld his mother, holding out her arms to him from afar; and it seemed to him, in his misery, that if he could but reach to where she was he would be saved. But at each step the sides of the road grew closer and closer together: in his frantic efforts to force his way he left his flesh hanging upon the walls—and when, panting, naked, and bloody, he was almost at the wished-for place, his mother was again as far off as before, and all his efforts were to be renewed. The phantoms continually pursued him, and shouted in his ear—

"Wo to the wretch who murdered his mother!"

Charles was roused at this frightful crisis by the tears of his brothers, who had come to embrace him for the last time previous to going on board the vessel which was to carry them to their destination. The duke asked their pardon in a humble voice, and relapsed into his despair. The children threw themselves on the ground, requesting with loud cries to partake their brother's fate, and imploring death as a relief from their agony. They were at length separated, but the sound of their lamentations continued to ring in the ears of the condemned. After some minutes of silence, two soldiers and two Hungarian officers entered the room, to announce to the Duke of Duras that his hour was come.

Charles followed them, without offering the slighest resistance, until they reached the fatal balcony where Andrea had been strangled. He was here asked if he wished to see a confessor. Upon his answering in the affirmative he was attended by a monk of the same convent in which the terrible scene had taken place, who listened to the confession of his sins, and granted him absolution. The duke then rose and walked to the place where Andrea had been thrown upon the ground, in order to pass the rope round his neck; and here, again kneeling down, he asked his executioners:

"My friends, tell me, I pray you, are there no remaining hopes for my life?"

They replied in the negative, and Charles exclaimed—

"Do, then, as you have been commanded."

At these words, one of the officers plunged his sword into his breast, the other cut off his head with a knife, and his corpse was thrown over the balcony into the garden, the same garden in which Andrea's body had remained three days unburied.

The King of Hungary then began his march for Naples, still preceded by his death-banner, refusing all the honours which were offered to him, sending back the canopy under which he ought to have entered, without pausing to give audience to the heads of the city, and without replying to the acclamations of the crowd. Armed at all points, he proceeded direct to the Castel-Nuovo, leaving behind him desolation and terror. His first act, upon his entry to the capital, was to order Donna Cancia to be immediately burnt alive. She was dragged, like the others, in a cart to the square of Sant'-Eligio, and there thrown into the flames. The young lady, whose beauty had not faded under her sufferings, was dressed as upon a festival: gay and smiling until the last moment, she laughed at the executioners, and blew kisses to the crowd.

A few days afterwards the king arrested Godfrey de Marsan, count of Squillace and high admiral of the kingdom, but promised him his life on condition that he should deliver to him his relation Conrad of Catanzaro, also accused of being a party to the conspiracy against Andrea. The high admiral, purchasing his pardon by infamous treachery, had no hesitation in sending his own son to entrap him into the town. The wretched man was soon in the king's power, who caused him to be broken alive upon a wheel covered with razors. The sight of these cruelties, instead of calming the king's rage, appeared to increase it. Every day new denunciations were followed by new punishments. The prisons were overflowing; and it seemed as though he was about to use the town and kingdom as if the whole nation had assisted in Andrea's death. Murmurs began to be raised against this barbarous government, and every one's wishes were again turned towards the fugitive queen. The Neapolitan nobles had unwillingly taken the oath of fidelity; and when the turn of the counts of San-Severino had come, fearing some snare, they refused to appear in the presence of the

Hungarians; and fortifying themselves in Salerno, they despatched the archbishop Roger, their brother, to learn the king's intentions towards them. Robert received him with great magnificence, and appointed him his privy counsellor and grand prothonotary of the kingdom. Upon this, Robert de San-Severino, and Roger Count of Clairmont, ventured alone to come before the king; and after having paid homage to him, they retired to their estates. The other nobles imitated their example; and, concealing their discontent under apparent respect, awaited a favourable moment to throw off the foreign yoke.

In the mean time the queen had arrived at Nice, after a voyage of five days, without meeting with any obstruction in her flight. Her journey from thence to Provence was a kind of triumph. Her beauty, her youth, her misfortunes, all, even to the mysterious rumours which were circulated respecting her adventures, conspired to awaken a universal interest in the country-people. Games and fêtes were got up to soften the bitterness of her exile; but in the midst of the joy with which she was received, in the villages, castles, and towns, Joan remained overcome with continual sadness, and brooded upon her misfortunes in mute misery.

At the gates of Aix she found the clergy, the nobility, and the chief magistrates, who received her respectfully, but without any marks of enthusiasm. In proportion as the queen advanced, her astonishment was redoubled as she remarked the coldness of the people, and the gloomy and constrained manner of the nobles who were escorting her. A thousand causes for alarm presented themselves to her agitated mind, and she could not help fearing some stratagem of the King of Hungary.

Hardly had the party arrived at the Chateau-Arnaud, than the nobles, drawing up in two lines, allowed the queen, her counsellor Spinelli, and two women to pass; then, closing their ranks, Joan found herself separated from the rest of her suite. A guard was then set upon the gates of the fortress.

There could be no further doubt that the queen was a prisoner; but she could form no conjecture of the reason for this strange proceeding. She interrogated the high dignitaries, who, while protesting their devotion and respect, refused to explain the grounds upon which they acted, until they should have received intelligence from Avignon. At the same time, they did not fail to pay Joan all the honours due to a queen, though she was kept in privacy, and refused permission to go out. This new anxiety augmented her grief; she knew not what had become of Louis of Tarento, and her imagination, always prone to invent misfortunes, repeated to her unceasingly, that she would soon have to lament his loss.

Louis of Tarento, still accompanied by his faithful Acciajuoli, after enduring many fatigues, had been driven by the waves into the port of Pisa, and from there had taken the road to Florence, to request assistance in men and money. But the Florentines had resolved to maintain a strict neutrality; and they consequently refused to receive him into their town. The prince, having lost this hope, was revolving gloomy projects in his mind, when Nicolas Acciajuoli interrupted him in a resolute tone:

"My lord, men are not born to the continual enjoyment of a prosperous fate; misfortunes will occur in spite of the greatest human foresight; you were rich and powerful, you are now a fugitive, and seeking assistance from others: you must then reserve yourself for better days. I have still a considerable fortune, as well as relatives and friends, whose wealth is at my entire disposal; let us endeavour to rejoin the queen, and immediately determine upon what is to be done; as for me, I shall ever defend and obey you, as my master and my prince."

The prince accepted these generous offers with lively gratitude, and replied that he would trust his person and his fortune in the hands of his counsellor. Acciajuoli, not content with his personal devotion to his master, induced his brother Angelo, Archbishop of Florence, who enjoyed great favour at the court of Avignon, to join with them, in interesting the pope in Louis of Tarento's cause. Accordingly without delay, the prince, his counsellor, and the good prelate, set sail for the port of Marseilles; but learning that the queen was detained a prisoner at Aix, they disembarked at Aigues-Mortes, and proceeded promptly to Avignon. The effects of the affection and esteem which the pope entertained for the person and character of the Archbishop of Florence, were soon manifested by the unexpected and almost paternal kindness with which Louis was received at the court of Avignon. When he bent his knee before the sovereign pontiff, his holiness drew him affectionately towards him, assisted him to rise, and saluted him by the title of king.

Two days after this, another prelate, the Archbishop of Aix, presented himself before the queen, and bowing solemnly, addressed her in the following words:

"Very gracious, and well-beloved sovereign, allow the humblest and most devoted of your servants, to ask mercy and pardon, in the name of your subjects, for the painful but necessary measure, which we believed ourselves compelled to take, with respect to your majesty. At the time of your arrival amongst us, the council of your faithful city of Aix had learnt from a good source, that the King of France had formed the scheme of giving our country to one of his sons, recompensing you for this loss by the cession of another domain, and that the Duke of Normandy was upon his way to Avignon, to solicit personally this exchange. We were resolved, madam, and had sworn before God, rather to perish to a man, than submit to the execrable tyranny of the French. But before proceeding to bloodshed, we wished to retain your august person as a sacred hostage, to avert from our walls the miseries of war; but now we have intelligence that this odious pretension has been abandoned, in a letter which we have received from the sovereign pontiff. We restore you, therefore, your entire liberty, together with our wishes and prayers to be able to retain you among us. Depart then, madam, if such is your pleasure; but previous to quitting this country, which your departure will plunge into grief, leave us at least the hope that you have pardoned us the apparent violence, with which we have acted towards you, in the dread of losing you, and remember, that on the day on which you cease to be our queen, you will sign the death-warrant of your subjects."

Joan reassured the archbishop and the deputation of her good town of Aix, by a melancholy smile, and promised them she would ever remember their love and attachment. For, this time, she could not be deceived in the true sentiments of the nobility and of the people; and fidelity so uncommon, which showed itself in sincere tears, touched her to the bottom of her heart, and made her bitterly recall the past. A splendid reception awaited her at Avignon. Louis of Tarento, and all the cardinals then at the court, had come out to meet her. Pages, clothed in the richest dresses, held a velvet canopy, emblazoned with golden fleurs-de-lis, over Joan's head.

Handsome young men and beautiful maidens, with their heads crowned with flowers, preceded her with songs of praise. The streets through which they passed were thronged with spectators; the bells were ringing, as upon great festivals of the church. Clement VI. received the queen at the palace with all the magnificence which surrounded solemn occasions.

No description can give an idea of the strange and bustling appearance of the city of Avignon at this time. Since Clement V. had transferred the pontificial see to Provence, Avignon, the rival of Rome, had become a town of palaces, in which the cardinals resided in unheard-of luxury. All the affairs of the people and of the king were conducted at the palace of Avignon. Ambassadors from every court, merchants from all nations, adventurers from all countries, Italians, Spaniards, Hungarians, Arabians, Jews, soldiers, gipsies, buffoons, poets, monks, and courtesans, swarmed and jostled against each other in the streets. It was a confusion of tongues, of customs, and of dress; an inextricable jumble of pomp and poverty, luxury and misery, prostitution and grandeur. Hence the austere poets of the middle age have termed this town, the modern Babylon.

There exists a curious memento of Joan's stay at Avignon, and of the exercise of her sovereign authority. Enraged at the impudence of the courtesans, who elbowed with effrontery all respectable persons in the town, the Queen of Naples published a celebrated proclamation, the first of the kind, and which has served for a model in other matters of the same sort, obliging these unfortunate women to live shut up in one asylum, which should be open all the year, with the exception of the three last days of the holy week, and the entrance to which should be prohibited to the Jews at all times. An abbess elected every year, presided over this singular convent; rules were established for the maintenance of order, and severe penalties enacted against any breach of discipline. The lawyers of the day made a great clamour against this salutary institution; the ladies of Avignon defended the queen loudly against the calumnious reports tending to stain her character; and there was but one unanimous voice extolling the wisdom of Andrea's widow: only this concert of praises was broken by the murmurs of the recluses themselves, who, in their coarse language, accused Joan of Naples of restricting their trade in order to reserve its monopoly for herself.

In the mean time Maria had rejoined her sister. She had taken refuge, accompanied by her two little daughters, after her husband's death, in the convent of Santa Croce; and while Louis of Hungary was employed in destroying his victims, she, exchanging her dress for the frock of an old monk, had escaped by a miracle, and succeeded in getting on board a ship bound for Provence. Maria gave her sister the frightful accounts of the cruelties practised by Louis of Hungary. In a short time a new proof of his implacable hatred confirmed the story of the poor princess: this was the arrival of his ambassadors at the court of Avignon, to petition formally for the queen's condemnation.

It was a memorable day upon which Joan of Naples pleaded her own cause before the pope, and in the presence of all the cardinals then at Avignon, of all the ambassadors of foreign powers, of eminent persons come from all parts of Europe, to be the witnesses of a trial unparalleled in history. Imagine an immense enclosure, in the centre of which, upon an elevated throne, as president of the august consistory, sat the vicar of God, the absolute and supreme judge, invested with temporal and spiritual power, with human and divine authority. At the right and left of the sovereign pontiff were seated the cardinals in their purple robes, and behind these kings of the sacred college were arranged, majestically extending to the bottom of the hall, their court of bishops, vicars, canons, deacons, archdeacons, and all the immense papal hierarchy. In front of the pontifical throne were the seats reserved for the Queen of Naples and her suite. At the feet of the pope were placed the ambassadors of the King of Hungary, who were to perform the part of silent accusers; the circumstances of the crime, and the proofs of the queen's culpability, having been previously debated by a commission appointed for that purpose. The remaining part of the hall was filled by a brilliant crowd of high dignitaries, illustrious captains, and noble ambassadors, each rivalling the other in luxury and pride. Every breath was suspended, and every eye was fixed upon the place from which Joan was to defend herself; and a movement of intense curiosity was visible through the compact mass, when the queen took the place reserved for her use.

The queen appeared, led by her uncle the old Cardinal of Perigord, and her aunt the Countess Agnes. Her demeanour was at once so modest and so lofty, her brow so sad and so pure, her look so fearless and so full of confidence, that before she uttered a sound the hearts of the whole assembly were with her. Joan was now twenty years old, and in the full bloom of her beauty; but the deadly paleness of her soft and transparent skin, as well as her emaciated cheeks, showed the sufferings of her mind. Among the spectators was a young man, with brown hair, a bright eye, and strongly-marked features, of whom our readers will hear more in the sequel; but, not to distract their attention, we will merely say, that this young man was named Jayme d'Arragon, Prince of Majorca, and that he would have spilt every drop of his blood to have wiped away one of the tears which were trembling upon the queen's eyelashes. Joan spoke in a broken and tremulous voice, and was obliged to pause, from time to time, to dry the tears which interrupted her speech. She related with so much grief the story of her husband's death, painted with such graphic truth the confusion and terror with which she had been seized at that frightful event, and covered her brow with her hands with such frantic despair, that a shudder of pity and horror ran through the assembly. And certainly, if at this moment her story was false, yet her anguish was true and terrible. An angel fallen through crime, she lied like Satan; but, like Satan, she was torn by the undying tortures of remorse. When at the close of her justification, melting into tears, she implored assistance and protection against the usurper of her kingdom, a universal cry of assent drowned her concluding words. Many laid their hands on their swords; and the Hungarian ambassadors hastily withdrew from the assembly, covered with confusion and dismay.

On the same evening, to the great satisfaction of the whole people, a decree was issued declaring Joan of Naples innocent of her husband's murder. Only, as no possible excuse could be offered for her conduct after the event, and her neglect in prosecuting the authors of the crime, the pope recognised a proof of magical intervention in the whole affair, and concluded that the fault attributed to Joan was the necessary consequence of some malignant fate, from which it was impossible to defend herself.* At the

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per assoluta verità del fatto non poteano scusare la regina e levare il same time his holiness confirmed the queen's marriage with Louis of Tarento, and granted to him the order of the golden rose, and the title of King of Sicily and Jerusalem. Perhaps there was some connexion between this decision and the fact that Joan, upon the eve of her acquittal, had sold the town of Avignon to the pope, for the sum of forty thousand florins.

While the queen was pleading her cause at the court of Clement VI., a horrible epidemic, described by the name of the *black plague*, the same as that of which Boccacio has left us so admirable a description, was ravaging the kingdom of Naples and the other parts of Italy. According to Matteo Villani's calculations, Florence lost, by this terrible scourge, three-fifths of her population, Bologna two-thirds, and nearly the whole of Europe was depopulated in this frightful proportion. The Neapolitans were, by this time, thoroughly disgusted with the barbarity and rapacity of the Hungarians, and only waiting a favourable opportunity to rise against the foreign oppressor, and to recall their legitimate sovereign, whom, with all her faults, such was the influence of youth and beauty upon this sensual people, they had never ceased to love. Scarcely had this contagion begun to scatter disorder among the army and confusion in the city, than imprecations burst from all parts against the tyrant and his butchers. Louis, threatened at once by the wrath of Heaven and the vengeance of men, equally in dread of disease and revolt, disappeared in the middle of the night, and leaving the government of Naples to Corrado Lupo, one of his officers, he hastened to embark at Barletta, and in his turn quitted the kingdom, as he had, a few months before, compelled Louis of Tarento to leave it.

This intelligence arrived at Avignon, at the precise time when the pope was about to grant his bull of absolution to the queen. It was immediately decided to retake the kingdom from the possession of Louis of Hungary's commissioner. Nicolas Acciajuoli set out for Naples, armed with the bull which was to prove the entire innocence of the queen, to dissipate all scruples, and awaken the people's enthusiasm. The counsellor took his way first to the castle of Melzi, commanded by his son Lorenzo, and the only fortress which had held out against the Hungarians.

The father and son embraced with the feeling of well-grounded pride which each felt, at the consciousness of two men of the same family having heroically done their duty. The governor of Melzi informed his father, that the arrogance and tyranny of the queen's enemies had disgusted every one; that a conspiracy in Joan's favour, organized in the university of Naples, had vast ramifications in every part of the kingdom, and that discord reigned in the foreigner's camp. The indefatigable counsellor then proceeded to Naples, proclaiming everywhere the queen's acquittal, her marriage with Louis of Tarento, and the indulgences which the pope promised to those who would receive their lawful sovereigns like loyal subjects.

Joan borrowed money wherever she could, armed galleys, and set off for Marseilles with her husband, her sister, and her two faithful counsellors, Acciajuoli and Spinelli, upon the 10th of September, 1348. The king and

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volgo della dubbiosa fama, proposero che se alcuno sospetto di non perfetto amore si potesse proporre o provare che ciò non era venuto per corrotta volontà della regina, ma per forza di *malie* ovvero *fatture* che gli erano state fatte, alle quali la sua natura fragile, femminile non avea saputo nè potuto riparare."—*Matteo Villani*, book ii,. chap. 24.

queen, not being able to effect an entrance at that port, which was in the possession of the enemy, disembarked at Santa-Maria-del-Carmine, near the river Sebeto, and proceeded to a palace near Porta-Capuana, in the midst of the most frantic applause from an immense crowd, and accompanied by the whole of the Neapolitan nobility. The Hungarians fortified themselves in the city; but Nicolas Acciajuoli, at the head of the queen's partisans, commenced such a rigid blockade, that one-half of her enemies were compelled to surrender, and the rest, betaking themselves to flight, scattered themselves in the interior of the kingdom. We shall not follow Louis of Tarento in his perilous career through Apulia, Calabria, and the Abruzzi, where he, one by one, recovered the fortresses occupied by the Hungarians. By unparalleled efforts of valour and patience, he had mastered almost all of the considerable places, when the aspect of affairs changed, and the fortune of war, for a second time, turned against him. A German captain, named Warner, who had deserted from the Hungarian army, to sell himself to the queen, having resold himself by new treachery, allowed himself to be surprised at Corneto by Conrado Lupo, the King of Hungary's chief lieutenant, and openly joined him, with a large body of adventurers, who fought under his command. This unforeseen defection compelled Louis of Tarento to make his way to Naples, and in a short time the King of Hungary, informed that his troops were rallying around his standard, and that they only waited his return to march upon the capital, disembarked at the port of Manfredoni, with a large reinforcement of horse and foot soldiers, and seizing upon Trani, Canosi, and Salerno, he laid siege to Aversa.

This intelligence was like a thunderbolt to Joan and her husband. The Hungarian army, composed of ten thousand cavalry and seven thousand infantry, was opposed by only five hundred soldiers, commanded by Giacomo Pignatelli. But in spite of this tremendous disproportion of numbers, the Neapolitan general repulsed the attack with great vigour; and the King of Hungary, who was fighting in the front, was wounded in the foot with an arrow. Louis, seeing that it would be difficult to carry the place by storm, resolved to force it by famine. The besieged for three months performed prodigies of valour; but resistance was impossible, and each day the Hungarians expected them to capitulate. Renaud des Baux, who ought to have arrived at Marseilles with a squadron of galleys, to defend the ports of the capital, and protect the queen's flight, in the event of the Hungarian army invading Naples, delayed by contrary winds, was compelled to cast anchor upon the way. Every thing seemed to conspire in favour of the enemy, and Louis of Tarento, whose generous soul was repugnant to shedding the blood of his valiant adherents in a desperate and unequal struggle, behaved nobly, offering the King of Hungary to decide their quarrel by single combat. The following is the authentic letter of Joan's husband, and the reply of Andrea's brother:

"Illustrious King of Hungary, who are come to invade our kingdom, we, by the grace of God, King of Jerusalem and Sicily, challenge you to single combat. We know well, that you trouble yourself no more about the death of your soldiers than if they were but dogs, but we who fear the misfortunes which may happen to our soldiers and adherents, we wish a personal combat with you to terminate this war, and to restore peace to our country. He of us two, therefore, who shall survive the other, shall be king. And that the duel may take place without obstacle, we propose that it shall be fought, either at Paris, in presence of the French king, in the town of Perugia, at Avignon, or at Naples. Choose one of these four places, and answer our proposal."

The King of Hungary, after taking the advice of his counsellors, replied as follows:

"Great King, we have read and considered your letter, and your challenge to single combat has pleased us extremely, but we do not approve of any of the four places which you have named, for several reasons. The King of France is your maternal grandfather, and although we are also related to him, he is not so nearly so to us, as to you. Avignon, although belonging to the sovereign pontiff, is the capital of Provence, and has always been under your government. We have not much more confidence in the town of Perugia, which is devoted to your cause. As to the city of Naples, it is not even necessary to write the reason why we reject it; you know well it is in revolt against us, and that you reign there. But if you desire to combat with us, it must be in the presence of the Emperor of Germany, who is the supreme master; or the King of England, who is our common ally, or the patriarch of Aquileia, who is a good catholic. But if you, in your turn, reject the places we propose, in order to remove all difficulty, and abridge all delay, we shall soon be near you with our army, and can then decide our quarrel, in the presence of the two camps."

Notwithstanding the exchange of these letters, Louis of Tarento's proposed duel did not take place. The garrison of Aversa had capitulated after an heroic resistance; and it was well known, that if the King of Hungary could arrive under the walls of Naples, he would not need to risk his life to take possession of the city. Fortunately, the Provençal galleys at length arrived in the harbour. The queen and her husband had scarcely time to embark, and take refuge in Gaeta, before the Hungarian army had arrived before Naples. The city was about to surrender, and had sent messengers to the king, humbly to implore for peace; but such was the insolence of the Hungarian, that the people, enraged, took up arms, and prepared to defend their hearths, with all the fury of despair.

While the Neapolitans were opposing the enemy at the Porta-Capuana, a strange circumstance was occurring at the other extremity of the town, which gives a complete picture of those times of barbarous violence, and infamous treachery. The widow of Charles of Duras, shut up in the Castello del Ovo, was waiting in intense anxiety the galley in which she was to rejoin her sister. Poor Maria, pale and trembling, with her little daughters strained to her breast, listened eagerly to every sound, with a mixture of terror and hope. Suddenly, steps were heard in the passage, and a friendly voice sounded in her ears. Maria fell upon her knees, and uttered a cry of joy: it was her deliverer.

Renaud des Baux, admiral of the Provençal squadron, entered respectfully, followed by his eldest son and his chaplain.

"Thanks, lord!" cried Maria, rising, "we are saved!"

"One moment, madam," replied Renaud, motioning her to stop, "you shall be saved, but upon one condition."

"Upon one condition?" murmured the astonished princess.

"Listen, madam; the King of Hungary, the avenger of the assassins of Andrea, and the murderer of your husband, is at the gates of Naples; the Neapolitan people and soldiers, after a last effort of courage, have yielded; and, in a short time, the fire and sword of the victorious army will scatter desolation and death on all sides. And this time the Hungarian executioner will spare no victims; he will slay mothers, before the eyes of their children,—children in their mothers' arms. The drawbridge of this castle is raised, and every man capable of holding a sword is at the other end of the town. Wo unto you then, Maria of Duras, if the King of Hungary remembers that you preferred his rival to him!"

"But are you not here to save me?" cried Maria in a voice of anguish, "did not Joan, my sister, order you to conduct me to her?"

"Your sister is in no condition to give orders," replied Renaud with a contemptuous smile, "she could only give me thanks for saving her life, and that of her husband, who basely took to flight, at the approach of the man whom he had dared to challenge to single combat."

Maria gazed fixedly at the admiral, to be certain that it was indeed he, who spoke of his sovereigns with such insolence; but terrified by the immovable expression of his countenance, she continued in a gentle voice:

"Since it is to your generosity alone, that I shall owe my life, and the lives of my children, I shall be eternally grateful. But hasten, my lord count; for every moment I expect to hear the cry of vengeance, and you will not leave me to be the prey of my cruel enemy?"

"God forbid, madam! I will save you at all risks; but, as I have already said, upon one condition."

"What is it?" inquired Maria, with forced resignation.

"It is, that you immediately espouse my son, in the presence of our reverend chaplain."

"Audacious!" cried Maria, starting back, her face crimsoned with indignation and shame; "is it thus you dare address the sister of your lawful sovereign? Return thanks to God that I pardon this insult, considering that a sudden frenzy has disturbed your reason; and endeavour, by your future devotion, to induce me to forget your past conduct."

The count, without answering a word, made a sign to his son and the priest, and made a movement as if to leave the room. At that moment Maria rushed towards him, and, joining her hands, implored him, in God's name, not to abandon her. Renaud stopped.

"I might have revenged myself," said he, "for the affront which you have given me in refusing my son with so much haughtiness; but I leave that care to Louis of Hungary, who will acquit himself of it excellently."

"Mercy for my poor daughters!" repeated the princess; "mercy, at least for my children, if my tears cannot touch your heart."

"If you love your children," answered the admiral, knitting his brows, "you will know how to act."

"But I do not love your son," cried Maria, in a voice in which pride and terror were strangely mingled. "Oh! my God, can any one thus outrage the feelings of a poor woman? But you, my father—you, who are the minister of truth and justice—make this man understand that God cannot be made the witness of an oath which will lead to madness—to despair!"

Turning to the admiral's son, she addressed him with sobs and tears:

young: you have loved, perhaps—or, at least, you will one
! I appeal to your honour as a young man—to your cour-
—to join with me in endeavouring to dissuade your father
cheme. You have never before seen me, and you know
t secretly love another man. Your pride ought to revolt

at seeing a weak woman so maltreated, who, at your feet, implores mercy and protection. One word from you, Robert, and I will bless you to the last moment of my life. Your remembrance will be engraved on my soul as that of my guardian angel, and my children shall be taught to utter your name in their evening prayers to God. Oh! tell me, will you save me? Do so, and perhaps one day I shall learn to love you."

"I must obey my father," answered Robert, without once raising his eyes upon the fair suppliant.

The priest remained silent. Two minutes elapsed, during which these four persons, each absorbed by their reflections, remained as immovable as statues. In this terrible interval Maria was tempted to throw herself into the sea; but a confused and distant noise broke upon her ear, which gradually increasing, and the voices becoming more and more distinct, she heard the cries of women in distress proceeding from the street.

"Fly! fly! fly! God has abandoned us! The Hungarians are in the town.

The tears of Maria's children answered these cries, and little Margherita, holding out her arms to her mother, expressed her terror in her childish language. Renaud, without deigning to cast a look upon this touching scene, drew his son towards the door.

"Stay!" said the princess, holding out her hand with a solemn gesture; "since God will send no other succour for my children, it is his wish that the sacrifice be accomplished."

And, falling upon her knees before the priest, she bent her head like a victim who awaits the blow of the executioner's axe. Robert de Baux placed himself at her side, and the preacher pronounced the usual forms of the church, and consecrated this infamous marriage with a sacrilegious benediction.

"All is finished," murmured the widow of Duras, casting a tearful glance upon her two daughters.

"No, all is not yet finished," replied the admiral, sternly. "Before setting off the marriage must be consummated."

"Oh, justice of God!" cried the princess in a stifled voice, and fell senseless on the floor.

Renaud des Baux steered his galleys for Marseilles, where he trusted to have his son crowned Count of Provence, in right of his strange marriage with Maria of Duras. But this base treachery was not to remain unpunished. The wind began to blow furiously, and drove them back towards Gaeta, where the queen and her husband had just arrived. Renaud ordered his sailors to keep out at sea, threatening to throw any one overboard who should dare to disobey his orders. The crew murmured; mutinous cries began to be heard on all sides; and the admiral, seeing that all would be lost, changed from threats to entreaties. But the princess, who had recovered her senses at the first thunderclap, rushed upon deck, and cried loudly for help.

"Help, Louis! help, my brave knights! death to the traitors who have basely outraged me!"

Louis of Tarento, followed by ten of his bravest knights, entered a large boat, and by vigorous exertions at the oars, they soon reached the galley. Maria briefly related the story of the treachery practised towards her, and turning to the admiral, with a withering look, she defied him to defend himself.

"Wretch!" cried the king, rushing upon the traitor, and running him through the body with his sword. Then, having caused his son, and the unworthy priest who had been the accomplices of his odious violence, to be loaded with chains, he returned to the port, accompanied by the princess and her daughters.

In the mean time the Hungarians, having entered one of the gates of Naples, triumphantly defiled towards the Castel-Nuovo; but while they were crossing the square *delle Corregie*, the Neapolitans perceived that the enemy's men and horses were so exhausted by the long-continued fatigues of the siege from Aversa, that a breath could have dispersed this army of phantoms. Then, changing from terror to audacity, they rushed upon the conquerors, and drove them back beyond the city-walls. This sudden popular reaction subdued the King of Hungary's pride, and made him more docile to the counsels of Clement VI., who, at length, thought it right to interfere. A truce was in the first place concluded, to continue from the month of February, 1350, to the beginning of April, 1351; but on the following year, this temporary cessation of hostilities was changed into a definitive peace, in consideration of the sum of three hundred thousand florins, which Joan paid to the King of Hungary to defray the expenses of the war.

After the departure of the Hungarians, a legate was sent by the pope to crown Joan and Louis of Tarento, and the day appointed for this solemnity was the 25th of May, the day of Pentecost. All the historians of that time speak enthusiastically of the magnificence of this festival, which has been immortalised by the pencil of Giotto, in the frescoes of the church, which, upon this occasion, took the name of the *Incoronata*. A general amnesty was proclaimed for all those persons who had fought upon either side, in the past wars; and the king and queen were received upon their way to the ceremony, with shouts of gladness.

But the day's joy was disturbed by an accident, which appeared to that superstitious people to be a sinister omen. As Louis of Tarento, mounted upon a richly-caparisoned horse, was passing the Porta-Petruccia, some ladies, who were viewing the procession from their windows, threw so many flowers upon the king, that the affrighted horse began to rear, and broke the bit of his bridle. Louis, finding himself unable to hold his steed, jumped lightly to the ground, but in so doing, the crown fell from his head, and broke into three pieces. Upon that same day expired the only daughter of Louis and Joan.

Nevertheless, the king, not wishing to cast a gloom upon this brilliant ceremony, for three days continued a course of tilts, tournaments, and festivities. But from this day, marked by a melancholy presage, his life was but a long succession of misfortunes. After carrying on wars in Sicily and Apulia, and quelling the rebellion of Louis de Duras, who ended his days in a dungeon, Louis of Tarento, exhausted by pleasure, undermined by a wasting disease, and overcome by domestic troubles, died of ague upon the 5th of June, 1362, at the age of forty-two: and scarcely had his corpse been laid in the royal tomb at San Domenico, before several suitors were disputing for the queen's hand.

But it was the Prince of Majorca, the handsome young man whom we have already mentioned, who carried her off from all his rivals, among whom was the son of the King of France. Jayme of Arragon had one of those calm and melancholy faces which a woman cannot resist. Great misfortunes, nobly endured, had cast a gloom upon his youth: he had passed thirteen years shut up in an iron cage, from which frightful prison he had escaped by means of a false key, and had afterwards wandered from court to court to recover his estates, and, it is said, was reduced to such a state of poverty that he was compelled to beg his bread. The fine person of the young stranger and the story of his adventures struck both Joan and Maria at the court of Avignon. Maria, in particular, loved him with a passion much too violent to be concealed in her heart.

When Jayme of Arragon arrived in Naples, the unfortunate princess, who had been married with a dagger at her breast, regained her liberty by means of a crime. Followed by four armed men, she entered the prison where Robert des Baux continued to expiate a crime which had been much more his father's than his own. Maria stood before the prisoner with crossed arms, blanched cheeks, and trembling lips. The interview was terrible. It was now the turn of the princess to threaten—of the young man to beg for mercy. Maria remained deaf to his entreaties, and the unfortunate man's bleeding head rolled at her feet, while his body was thrown by the executioners into the sea. But God did not allow this murder to go unpunished. Jayme preferred the queen to her sister; and the widow of Duras gained by the crime only the contempt of the man whom she loved, and the gnawing remorse which brought her to an early grave.

Joan was married successively to Jayme of Arragon, son of the King of Majorca, and to Otho of Brunswick, of the imperial family of Saxony. We shall pass rapidly over these years, to reach the close of this story of crimes and expiations. Jayme's existence, separated from his wife, continued to be one of storms and disasters. He struggled for a long time in Spain against Peter the Cruel, who had usurped his kingdom, and died in Navarre about the end of the year 1375.* As to Otho, not being able to escape the divine vengeance which was hanging over the court of Naples, he courageously shared the queen's fortunes to the last. Not having any legitimate offspring, Joan adopted her nephew, Carlo del Pace, so called from the peace of Treviso. This young man was the son of Louis of Duras, who, after revolting against Louis of Tarento, had perished miserably in a prison. The child would have shared his father's fate had it not been for Joan's intercession. She afterwards loaded him with benefits, and married him to Margherita, her sister Maria's daughter by her cousin Charles of Duras.

Grave dissensions arose about this time between the queen and one of her old subjects, Bartolommeo Prignani, become pope under the name of Urban VI. Irritated by the queen's opposition, the pope had one day said in a fit of rage that he should live to see her spinning in a cloister. Joan, to revenge herself for this insult, openly favoured the antipope, Clement VII., and offered him an asylum in her own chateau, when, pursued by the troops of Urban, he had taken refuge at Fondi. But the people rose against Clement, slew the Archbishop of Naples, who had assisted at his election, broke the cross which was carried before the procession of the anti-pope, and left him barely time enough to get on board a galley, in which he set sail for Provence. Urban declared Joan deposed from her throne, absolved her subjects from their oaths of allegiance, and gave the crown of Sicily and Jerusalem to Charles del Pace, who marched upon Naples at the head of eight thousand Hungarians. The queen, unable to believe in such base ingratitude, sent his wife Margherita, whom she could have kept as a hostage, and her two children, Ladislaus and Joan, afterwards the second queen of that name, to meet her adopted son. But, in a short time, the victorious army arrived before Naples, and Charles besieged the queen in her palace, ungratefully forgetting that that woman had saved his life, and loved him as a mother.

Joan endured, during this siege, what soldiers hardened to the fatigues of war could not have borne. She saw her faithful subjects perishing around her, destroyed by hunger or decimated by disease. After depriving them of provisions, the besiegers threw putrifying corpses into the fortress, to infect the air they breathed. Otho was detained with his troops at Aversa; Louis of Anjou, brother of the King of France, whom she had named as her successor after disinheriting her nephew, did not come to her aid, and the Provençal galleys, which Clement VII. had promised to send her, had not made their appearance in the harbour. Joan demanded a truce of fifty days, at the end of which time she engaged to surrender the fortress, if Otho did not come to her relief.

Upon the fiftieth day Otho's army entered by the side of Piedigrotta. The contest was furiously maintained upon both sides; and Joan, upon the top of a tower, followed with her eyes the cloud of dust which rose from her husband's horse, through the thickest of the fight. For a long time the victory remained uncertain; when at length the prince pushed bravely towards the royal standard, and eager to engage his enemy hand to hand, rushed into the centre of the hostile army with so violent a shock, that attacked upon all sides, covered with blood and sweat, and with his sword broken in his hand, he was compelled to surrender. An hour afterwards Charles wrote to his uncle, the King of Hungary, that Joan was in his power, and that he waited his majesty's commands respecting the fate of his prisoner.

It was upon a lovely May morning that the queen became a prisoner in the castle of Aversa. Otho had been released on condition that he should quit Naples; and Louis of Anjou, having at length raised an army of fifty thousand men, marched in all haste to reconquer the kingdom. Neither of these welcome changes in her situation had been communicated to Joan, who had for some days been living in complete solitude. Spring was displaying all its beauty upon these enchanting plains, which have well deserved the name of *campagna felice*. The orange-trees, scattering perfume from their blossoms, the cherry-trees covered with their ruby-coloured fruit, the olives displaying their emerald leaves, the pomegranate with its crimson flowers, the wild mulberry, and the evergreen laurel; all the vegetation which has not need of the hand of man flourished in that delicious spot, which nature has laid out like a vast garden, intersected by little solitary paths, bordered by green hedges, and watered by subterraneous springs. Joan leant upon her window, breathing the sweet per- mes of spring. A light breeze played upon her burning brow and cooled fevered cheeks. Melodious and distant voices, the sounds of well- n lays, alone broke the silence of the little room in which the most ed and brilliant existence of that bustling time was passing away in y tears and repentance.

e queen recalled in her mind the circumstances of her whole life, from the age of childhood; fifty years of deceptions and sufferings. She remembered the happy days of her infancy, the affection of her grandfather, the pure delights of that period of innocence; her childish games with her little sister and her cousins. She remembered how she had trembled at the first thoughts of marriage, of constraint, lost liberty, and bitter regrets; she remembered with horror the deceitful words whispered in her ear, which had sown in her young heart the seeds of corruption and vice, and poisoned her whole afterlife. Then came the memory of her first love, of Robert of Cabane's perjury and desertion, and the moments of delirium which she had passed in the arms of Bertrand d'Artois. All the drama, with its tragic catastrophe, came back with vivid clearness to her melancholy reflections. And then cries of agony echoed in her soul, as upon that terrible and fatal night, when the dying voice of Andrea implored mercy from his assassins. A deathlike silence succeeded this horrible agony, and the queen saw the vehicles passing before her eyes in which her accomplices had been tortured. All the rest was one continued dream of flight and exile, remorse of the soul, chastisement from Heaven and malediction from the earth. A frightful solitude surrounded the queen: husbands, lovers, relations, friends, all that she had loved or hated in the world, were dead; her joys, her griefs, her wishes, and her hopes, had all disappeared for ever. The unhappy queen, unable to struggle against these images of desolation, tore herself from her terrible revery, and kneeling down before a crucifix, wept bitterly and prayed with fervour. She was still beautiful, notwithstanding the extreme paleness of her face. The noble contour of her features remained in all its purity; the glow of repentance animated her fine eyes with superhuman brightness, and the hopes of pardon raised a heavenly smile upon her lips.

Suddenly, the door of the room in which she was praying flew open; and two Hungarian barons, in complete armour, presented themselves before her, making a sign that she should follow them. She rose and obeyed in silence; but a dismal cry burst from her when she recognised the place where Andrea and Charles of Duras had each died a violent death. Recovering herself, however, she inquired in a calm voice why they had brought her to that place. One of the barons replied by showing her a rope of silk and gold.

"Let God's justice be accomplished!" cried Joan, falling upon her knees.

And in a few minutes she had ceased to suffer.

This was the third corpse which had been thrown over the balcony of Aversa.*

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* This story, both in its substance and in its details, is recorded with the most scrupulous truth. We have consulted the different versions of Giannone, Summonte, Villani, Rainaldo, Palmieri, Collenuccio, Spondano, Gataro, and particularly the Latin chronicle of Domenico Gravina, the contemporary author.

NISIDA.

1825.

If our readers, struck by the Italian proverb, wishing to see Naples before they die, inquired of us, which is the most favourable time to visit that city of enchantments, we would advise them to land at the Mole or the Mergellina, upon a fine summer's day, at the hour when some solemn procession is leaving the cathedral.

At such a time, no pen can describe the profound and lively emotion of the people. The whole city appears as gay as a bride upon a marriage morning; the gloomy fronts of marble and granite disappear under silken hangings and garlands of flowers, the rich parade in their luxury, the poor clothe themselves proudly in their rags. All is light, harmony, and perfume, and you hear around you a noise like the buzzing of an immense hive, intermixed with cries of festivity. The church bells are all repeating their sonorous scales, the sound of military music is heard playing triumphal marches in the distance, and the venders of sherbet and pastry extol their different articles with lungs of iron. Groups are formed, accosting, questioning, and gesticulating; on all sides may be seen, sparkling looks, eloquent pantomime and picturesque attitudes; there reigns a general bustle, a bewitching charm, an indescribable intoxication of the spirits. The earth is very nearly akin to heaven, and it will be easily understood, that, if God would chase away death from this place of delights, the Neapolitans would desire no other paradise.

Our story commences with one of these magical scenes. It was the day of the Assumption, in the year 1825, four or five hours after sunrise, and the long street of Forcella, lit up from one end to the other by its oblique rays, divided the city into two parts. The pavement composed of lava, shone with all the brilliancy of mosaic, and the king's troops, adorned with waving plumes, lined the streets like a living wall. The balconies, casements, terraces, and wooden galleries, erected during the night, all thronged with spectators, had much the appearance of the boxes of a theatre. An immense crowd, clothed in the most lively colours, invaded the reserved space, and here and there broke through the military banks, like an overflowing torrent. These intrepid gazers, glued to their places, would have waited the half of their lives without exhibiting the slightest signs of impatience.

At last, towards noon, the report of a cannon was heard, and was followed by a cry of general satisfaction. This was the signal that the procession had set out from the cathedral. At the same moment a charge of cavalry swept those persons who remained in the centre of the street, the regiments of the line opened their ranks to allow them to make their escape, and in a short time nothing remained upon the wide causeway, but some startled dog, hooted by the people, hunted by the soldiers, and running here and there to escape from its unpleasant situation.

The cortège proceeded through the street of Vescovato; the van was composed of the different companies of merchants and artificers, hatters, weavers, bakers, butchers, cutlers, and goldsmiths. They were clothed in black coats, short breeches, shoes and silver buckles. As there was nothing in the appearance of these gentlemen to amuse the crowd, whispers began by degrees to be heard among the spectators, then the lightest spirits hazarded jests upon the fattest among the citizens, and at length the boldest lazzaroni crept between the soldiers' legs to pick up the wax, which fell from their lighted tapers.

After the working classes came the religious orders, from the Dominicans to the Carthusians, from the Carmelites to the Capuchins. They advanced slowly: their eyes fixed upon the ground, with austere gait, and their hands upon their hearts. There were some among these faces, ruddy, beaming, and fat, with herculean heads, set upon necks like those of bulls; others with lean and sunken cheeks, hollowed by suffering and expiation, resembling phantoms, rather than living men; in one word, the bright and the dark side of monastic life.

At this moment Nunziata and Gelsomina, two charming girls, profiting by the gallantry of an old corporal, advanced their pretty heads to the front row. This was a flagrant interruption of the continuity, but the old veteran appeared inclined to slacken his discipline.

"Look! there is father Bruno!" said Gelsomina, suddenly. "Good day, father Bruno!"

"Hush! cousin, do not speak to the procession."

"That would be a good jest! why that is my confessor. Am I not to say good day to my confessor?"

"Be silent! babbler."

"Who said that?"

"Oh! my dear, it is brother Cucuzza, the collector."

"Where? where is he?"

"There! see he is laughing to himself—"

While the two cousins, were thus making their endless commentaries upon the Capuchins and their beards, the capes of the canons, and the surplices of the seminarists, the *feroci* ran from the other side, to re-establish order with the butt ends of their carbines.

"By the blood of my patron!" cried a stentorian voice, "if I get hold of you, between finger and thumb, I will make you remember it, for the rest of your life."

"What is the matter, Gennaro?"

"It is this cursed rascal, who for the last hour has been standing behind my back, as if he could see through it."

"It is scandalous!" retorted the person alluded to, in a doleful voice; "I have been here ever since yesterday evening, I slept in the open air to get a good place, and after all, this abominable giant comes and plants himself before me, like an obelisk."

The fellow lied like a Jew, but the crowd rose unanimously against the obelisk. He possessed an undoubted superiority over them, and the majority are always composed of pigmies.

"Come down there, from your pedestal!"

"Get off your ladder!"

"Take your hat off!"

"Take your head off!"

"Sit down!"

"Lie down!"

This outbreak of curiosity, which evaporated in invectives, plainly announced that the more interesting part of the sight was approaching. Accordingly, the chapters, curates, and bishops, the pages and chamberlains of the king, the magistrates of the city, and the gentlemen of the royal chamber, passed before the delighted eyes of the people, after which came the king himself, following the splendid statue of the Virgin, with his head bared, and a lighted taper in his hand.

The contrast was striking; after the grayheaded monks, and pale novices, came young and gaily-dressed officers, following the procession with evident weariness, casting their eyes up to the pretty faces adorning the casements which they passed, and interrupting the holy psalms, with very unorthodox conversation.

"Have you remarked, my dear Doria, with what ape-like grace the old Marchioness of Acquaspara takes her glass of ice?"

"Her nose makes it grow pale. But what fair bird is that who clears the way before her?"

"It is the Cyrenean."

"Whom say you? I never read that name in the golden book."

"That is she, assisting the poor marquis to carry his cross."

The profane allusion of the officer was lost in a long murmur of admiration, which suddenly arose among the crowd, and all eyes were fixed upon one of the young girls, who were scattering flowers before the Madonna. She was indeed a ravishing creature. Her head beamed with intellect. Her hair as black as jet, and as smooth as velvet, fell in ringlets around her shoulders; her brow was as white as alabaster, and as polished as a mirror; her fine brown eyebrows, beautifully arched, were placed on the opal of her temples; her eyelashes were half closed, and their black fringe veiled a look of divine emotion; and her small and straight nose, gave to her whole profile that character of classical beauty which is rapidly disappearing from the world. A serene smile, one of those ineffable smiles which seem to have just left the soul, and hardly to have reached the lips, played upon her mouth with an expression of happiness and peace. Nothing could be more perfect than the chin, which terminated the irreproachable oval of this radiant creature's face; her pure white neck, joined to her breast with a beautiful bend, supported her head with grace, like the stalk of a flower, waved by a light breeze.

A corset of crimson velvet, worked with gold, set off her fine bust to the best advantage, from which descended the thousand folds of an ample petticoat, falling to her feet, like the severe robes with which the Byzantine painters have chosen to clothe their angels. She was truly a lovely creature, and no man there present had ever before looked upon such modest and perfect beauty.

Amongst those who gazed upon this lovely vision with the greatest earnestness, was the young Prince of Brancaleone, one of the first nobility of the kingdom. Handsome, wealthy, and brave, he had at twenty years of age surpassed all the known Don Juans of the day in the number and variety of his amours. The young ladies of fashion professed to abhor, and secretly adored him; the most virtuous among them were compelled to fly from his presence, as all resistance seemed impossible; and the hairbrained young courtiers had unanimously chosen him as their model. To give an idea, in one word, of this fortunate personage, it will be sufficient for our readers to know, that in matters of seduction the devil could not have formed any thing more perfect, even in this progressive age.

The prince was muffled up for the occasion, in a sufficiently grotesque costume, which he wore with an air of ironical gravity. A black satin doublet, short breeches, embroidered hose, and shoes with gold buckles, formed the principal part of his habiliments; and above these he wore a robe of brocade, lined with ermine, and having long sleeves, and a splendid diamond-hilted sword at his side. By a distinction granted to his rank, he was permitted to carry one of the six gilded poles which sustained the royal canopy.

While the procession was moving forward, Eligi de Brancaleone cast a side look upon a little man, as red as a lobster, and with a face covered with seams, who walked almost by his side, holding his excellency's hat in his hand, with as much solemnity as was in his power.

We request the permission of our readers to interrupt our story, to give a short biographical sketch of this personage.

Trespolo was born of poor parents, but thieves; and it was owing to this cause that he was early left an orphan. At liberty as to his future prospects, he studied life under an eminently social point of view. If a certain ancient philosopher is to be believed, we are all sent into the world to solve a problem; as for him, he wished to do nothing; that was Trespolo's problem. By turns sexton, juggler, apothecary's boy, and cicerone, he was successively disgusted with all these employments. A beggar's life was, in his opinion, too much work, and he thought it infinitely more troublesome to be a thief than an honest man. After much reflection he decided in favour of contemplative philosophy. He dearly loved the horizontal position, and his greatest pleasure in the world was to study the stars. Unfortunately, however, the good man found himself one fine day, in the midst of his meditations, in great danger of dying of hunger; which would certainly have been very annoying, as he had almost accustomed himself to dispense with eating altogether.

But, being probably predestined to play a little part in our story, God rescued him this time, and sent to his aid—not one of his angels—the rogue was not worthy of such assistance—but a dog belonging to Brancaleone's pack of hounds. The noble animal smelt out the philosopher, and gave utterance to a charitable growl, which would have done honour to his brethren at Mount Saint-Bernard. The prince, who was returning triumphantly from the chase, having had upon that day the double fortune to kill a bear and to ruin a countess, had the unusual fancy to do a good action. He approached the prostrate form of the clown, by this time almost a corpse, raised the wretched object upon his feet, and, seeing that there was still some hope of his life, he ordered his attendants to take him with them.

From that day Trespolo saw the dream of his life gradually realized. A little more than a menial, a little less than major domo, he became his master's confidant, who extracted the principal part of his talents for his use; for Trespolo had the cunning of a demon, and almost the slyness of a woman, in his breast. The prince, who had acutely guessed that this genius was idle in his nature, only asked his advice: and truly he was well qualified to give it.

Nevertheless, as nothing is perfect in this world, Trespolo had strange moments, even in this delightful life; occasional panics, which afforded much amusement to his master, interrupted his happiness. At such times he would stammer incoherently, sigh profoundly, and suddenly lose his appetite. In fact, the good man was fearful of damnation. The thing was very simple: at one time he had feared every thing, and it had been often preached to him that the devil will not grant a moment's rest to those who have had the misfortune to fall into his clutches.

Trespolo was in one of these moments of repentance, when the prince, after gazing at the young girl with the avidity of a vulture about to pounce upon its prey, asked the advice of his usual counsellor upon the matter. The poor valet instantly understood his master's abominable intention, and not wishing to incur the guilt of a sacrilegious conversation, he opened his eyes widely, and raised them towards heaven with an air of devotion. The prince coughed, stamped his foot, and struck him upon the legs with the hilt of his sword, without obtaining the slightest mark of attention, the object he addressed having the air of a man completely absorbed by celestial reflections. Brancaleone felt a strong desire to twist his neck, but both his hands were employed in holding the canopy; besides which, the king was present.

They at length approached the church of Santa-Chiara, the burying-place of the Neapolitan monarchs, where several princesses of the blood, exchanging their crowns for veils, have submitted to be immured in a living grave. The nuns, the novices, and the abbess, concealed by the blinds, threw flowers upon the procession from the casements. A bouquet fell at the feet of the Prince of Brancaleone.

"Trespolo, pick up this bouquet," said the prince, in so loud a tone, that the domestic had no possible excuse to disobey. "It is from sister Theresa," continued he in a lower voice; "there is nowhere greater fidelity than in a convent."

Trespolo picked up the bouquet, and approached his master, with an air of confusion.

"Who is that girl?" inquired he laconically.

"Which?" stammered the servant.

"*Cospetto!* she who is walking before us."

"I do not know her, my lord."

"You must contrive to do so before this evening.

"I must go a considerable distance to obey your commands."

"You do know her, then, you insupportable rascal? I have a great mind to hang you up, like a dog."

"For pity's sake, my lord, think of your soul's health, reflect upon eternal life."

"I advise you, rather, to think upon your temporal life. What is her name?"

"She is called Nisida; she is the most beautiful girl in the island from which she takes her name. She is innocence itself! Her father is nothing but a poor fisherman; but I can assure your excellency that in his native place he is respected as a king."

"Indeed!" answered Brancaleone, with an ironical smile." I confess, to my great shame, that I have never visited the little island of Nisida. You will therefore prepare a boat for to-morrow, and then we shall see."

He stopped suddenly, for the king's eyes were upon him, and continued with an inspired air, in the deepest and most sonorous notes that he could utter,

"*Genitori genitoque laus et jubilatio!*"

"*Amen*," replied the domestic, in an equally loud voice.

Nisida, the beloved daughter of Solomon the fisherman, was, as we have said, the fairest flower in the isle from which she took her name. This island is the most charming place, the most delicious corner with which we are acquainted. It is a casket of verdure placed in the midst of the pure and transparent waters of the bay, a hill covered with orange groves and laurel roses, and having a chateau of white marble at the top. Around you is spread the magical view of that immense amphitheatre, one of the greatest wonders of the creation. There lies Naples, the voluptuous siren, carelessly reclining upon the banks of the sea: there Portici, Castellamare, Sorrento, whose names alone bring back a thousand thoughts of poetry and love to the mind; and there Pausilippo, Baja, Pouzzoleo, and those vast plains where the ancients placed their elysium; sacred solitudes, which were said still to be peopled by men of other days, where the earth echoed to the sounds of footsteps, like an immense tomb, and the air was filled with unknown sounds and strange melodies.

Solomon's house was upon that side of the island from which, turning your back to the capital, the blue crests of Caprea may be seen in the distance. Nothing could be more simple and more gay. The brick walls were thickly covered with green ivy, and enamelled with white bell flowers; the ground floor consisted of one large room, in which the men and family took their meals; on the first floor was the virgin chamber of Nisida, lighted by one window, looking out upon the bay; above this chamber was a terrace, after the Italian style, with its four pillars festooned with vine-leaves, and its large parapet covered with moss and wild flowers. A little hawthorn hedge, held in the utmost veneration, traced a kind of rampart round the fisherman's property, which protected his house better than deep ditches or embattled walls would have done. The boldest roysterers in the neighbourhood would have preferred fighting in front of the parsonage, or in the church-porch itself, rather than in the neighbourhood of Solomon's little court. It was, nevertheless, the place of meeting for the whole island. Every evening, at the same hour, the good women of the vicinity came together to work their woollen caps, and indulge in friendly gossip. Groups of little sunburnt children enjoyed their diversions, rolling upon the green turf, and throwing handfuls of sand in each other's eyes, while their mothers gave themselves up to the serious discussion of trifles, which characterizes village conversation. Thus they assembled every evening before the fisherman's dwelling; a silent and almost involuntary homage, consecrated by custom and complained of by none.

The ascendancy which the aged Solomon possessed over his equals had been gained in so simple and natural a way, that no fault could be found with it. His power had increased from day to day without any one remarking it, unless indeed it were to notice the advantage which it brought them, in the same manner as men do not perceive the growth of trees, until they can repose beneath the branches. If any dispute arose in the island, the two adversaries invariably preferred having it settled by the fisherman's decision to putting it into the hands of the law; and he generally the good fortune or the talent to send away the parties contented. He could prescribe remedies better than any other doctor ; for it seldom happened that himself or some one of his family had not experienced the same malady which he proposed to cure; and his science, based upon his own experience, was generally attended with the happiest results. Besides this, he had no interest, like ordinary medical men, in prolonging the illness of his patients. For a number of years the only recognised formality, guaranteeing the inviolability of a contract in the island, was the intervention of the fisherman. The two parties joined hands in Solomon's presence, and that was enough. They would rather have thrown themselves into Vesuvius, in the midst of its greatest eruption, than have broken so solemn an engagement. At the time in which our story commences, it was impossible to discover a person in the island who had not experienced the effects of the fisherman's generosity, without it having been in the slightest degree necessary for him to explain his wants. As it was customary for the little people of Nisida to pass their hours of recreation in front of Solomon's cottage, the old man, while walking slowly in the midst of them, humming his favourite tunes, would draw from them their moral and physical infirmities ; and the same evening they might make certain to see either himself or his daughter arrive at their homes, to give a benefit to every misery, a balm to every wound. In short, he monopolized to himself all the employments meant to assist humanity. Lawyers, doctors, and notaries, all who prey upon civilization, beat a retreat before the patriarchal benevolence of the fisherman.

The day after that of the Assumption, Solomon, according to his custom, was seated upon a stone in front of his house, his legs crossed, and his arms hanging carelessly by his sides. At the first glance, his age would not have been estimated at more than sixty, although he was in reality upwards of eighty. He retained all his teeth, as white as pearls. His forehead, calm, serene, and unwrinkled, crowned with hair of silvery whiteness, had the firmness and polish of marble; and the sparkling glance of his blue eye revealed a freshness of mind and an everlasting youth, such as fable assigns to sea gods. He exposed his bare arms and muscular neck, with an old man's pride. No gloomy thought or stinging remorse disturbed the long and peaceful course of his existence. He had never seen a tear shed around him without hastening to wipe it away; poor as he was, he had managed to bestow benefits which all the kings of the earth could not have repaid him with their gold; ignorant as he was, he had spoken to his equals the only language which they understood, the language of the heart. One bitter drop alone had been mingled with this inexhaustible stream of happiness ; one grief alone had obscured his sunny days with a cloud; this was his wife's death, whom he had not yet forgotten.

All the affection of his soul was lavished upon Nisida, whose birth had been the cause of her mother's death; he loved her with that passionate love which old men feel for the youngest of their children. At this moment he was gazing upon her with the deepest tenderness, and following her with his eyes, as she came and went amongst the groups of children, gently reproving them when their games were too dangerous or noisy, and then, seating herself among their mothers, she would take a part in their conversation with serious and thoughtful interest. Nisida was still more beautiful than upon the preceding day; with the perfumed cloud which had covered her from head to foot, had disappeared all that mystical romance which had drawn all eyes in admiration upon her. She was once more a daughter of Eve, without any diminution of her charms. Simply attired, as upon working days, there was nothing in her appearance to distinguish her from her companions, excepting her great beauty and the transparent whiteness of her skin. Her beautiful black tresses were confined by a little chased silver bodkin, recently imported from Paris, by right of the supremacy which the fair Parisians hold upon the fashions of all countries, as the English possess the dominion of the sea.

Nisida was adored by her young friends, and all their mothers had proudly adopted her; she was the glory of the island. The belief in her superiority was so general among the people, that if any one had the boldness to speak too highly of his pretensions, he became the jest of all his comrades. The most renowned dancers of the tarantella were put out of countenance by Solomon's daughter, and dared not dance in her presence. It sometimes happened that singers from Amalfi or Sorrento, drawn there by the beauty of the angelic creature, ventured to breathe their passion in song, taking care to veil it by the most delicate allusions. But they rarely reached the last couplet of their serenade, for at the slightest noise they would suddenly stop, throw down their triangles and guitars, and fly away like startled nightingales. One only had sufficient courage to brave the jeerings of his companions; his name was Bastiano, the most renowned diver in the island. He sung also, but his voice was deep and hollow; his songs were melancholy, and his melodies filled with sadness. He sang without any accompaniment, and never went away until his lay was concluded. Upon this day, he was even more gloomy than usual; he remained fixed, as if by enchantment, upon a bare and slippery rock, and cast a look of contempt upon the women who were jesting at his ill temper. The sun, which was sinking into the sea, like a globe of fire, threw its light upon his stern features, as, absorbed by melancholy thoughts, he sang in the melodious language of his country, these plaintive words:

"Oh, window! who gleamest in the darkness like a half-opened eye, how gloomy you look! Alas! alas! my poor sister is sick!

"Her mother bends over me in tears, and says to me: Your poor sister is dead and buried.

"Jesus! Jesus! have pity upon me; you pierce me to the heart.

"Tell me, my neighbours, how it came to pass; repeat to me her last words.

"She had a burning thirst, and refused to drink, because you were not near to offer her water from your hand.

"O my sister! my sister!

"She refused her mother's kiss, because you were not near to embrace her.

"O my sister! my sister!

"She wept until her last sigh, because you were not near to wipe away her tears.

"O my sister! my sister!

"We have put a crown of orange-blossoms upon her brow, we have covered her with a snow-white veil; we had laid her calmly in her bier.

"Thanks, my kind neighbours; I will go to rejoin her.

"Two angels descended from heaven, and carried her with them on their wings. The holy Virgin received her at the gates of Paradise.

"Thanks, my kind neighbours; I will go to rejoin her.

"They seated her upon a bank of light; they gave her a necklace of rubies, and she sang her rosary with the Virgin.

"Thanks, my kind neighbours; I go to rejoin her."

And thus concluding his melancholy lay, he suddenly precipitated himself from the rock, upon which he was seated, into the sea, as though he really meant to destroy himself. Nisida, and the other women present, screamed with terror, for the diver remained for several minutes without coming to the surface.

"Are you turned foolish?" cried a young man, who suddenly made his appearance amongst the women, without any one noticing his presence. "Why should you be frightened? You know well enough that Bastiano never does any thing else. Be calm, all the fish in the Mediterranean will be drowned before he will. Water is his natural element. Good day, my sister; good day, my father."

The young fisherman kissed Nisida upon the forehead, approached his father, and, bending his handsome head before him, at the same time doffing his red cap, respectfully kissed his father's hand. In this manner he came every evening to ask the old man's blessing, before setting out to sea, where he frequently passed the whole night, fishing in his boat.

"God bless you, my Gabriel!" said the old man tenderly, passing his hand through his son's black and curly hair, while a tear rolled down his cheek.

Then rising, he addressed the groups who surrounded him, with a voice full of dignity and calmness:

"Now, my children, it is time to separate; the young to work, the aged to repose. Hark! the *angelus* is sounding."

They all knelt down, and after a short prayer, every one retired to their own homes; Nisida, after paying her father the last attentions of the day, went up to her room, and replenishing the lamp with oil, which burnt day and night before the Virgin, she leant upon her casement, and putting aside the branches of jasmine, which formed a scented curtain to her window, she looked out upon the sea, and seemed buried in a deep and pleasing revery.

At this same time, a little boat, rowed by two men, landed at the opposite side of the island. The night was by this time entirely fallen. A little man first carefully got out, and offered his hand respectfully to another person, who, disdaining this feeble support, leapt lightly to the ground.

"Well! rascal," cried he, "how do you think I look?"

"My lord is perfect."

"I flatter myself I am. That the metamorphosis may be the more startling, I have chosen the most ragged dress which ever adorned a Jew's shop with its tatters."

"My lord has the appearance of a pagan god, in quest of an adventure. Jupiter has put up his thunderbolt, and Apollo deposited his rays in his pockets."

"Truce to mythology; and, at the same time, I forbid you to call me, my lord."

"Yes, my lord."

"If the investigations I made during the day are correct, the house ought to be upon the other side of the island, in the most solitary and out-of-the-way corner. Walk to a certain distance, and do not trouble yourself about me, for I know my part by heart."

The young Prince of Brancaleone, whom our readers have already recognised, in spite of the darkness of the night, walked towards the fisherman's house, making as little noise as possible, and, after making a thorough observation of the place which he meant to attack, he waited patiently until the moon should light up the scene which he had prepared. He was not doomed to wait long, for the darkness gradually disappeared, and Solomon's cottage became bathed in silver light.

He then approached with a timid step, raised his eyes to the casement with a suppliant look, and began to sigh with all the power of his lungs. The young maiden, thus suddenly aroused from her reflections by this singular-looking personage, drew back quickly, and began to close the shutters of her window.

"Stay, charming Nisida!" cried the prince, like a man overpowered by irresistible passion.

"What do you wish with me, signore?" replied the young girl, astonished at being thus addressed by her name.

"To adore you, as the Madonna is adored, and to try and make you compassionate my sufferings."

Nisida looked earnestly at him, and after some moments of reflection, as if some sudden thought had struck her, she suddenly inquired—

"Are you of this island or a stranger?"

"I arrived in this island," replied the prince, without hesitation, "when the sun took its farewell of earth, and dipped into the placid sea."

"And who are you?" continued the young girl, understanding nothing from these fine words.

"Alas! I am but a poor student, although I may one day become a great poet, like Tasso, whose verses you have often heard sung by the departing fishermen, as they waft their last adieus from the ocean to the shore."

"I know not if I do wrong in speaking to you; but I will at least be frank with you," said Nisida, blushing; "I have the misfortune to be the daughter of the richest man in the island."

"Your father will not be inflexible," replied the poet, with warmth; "one word from you, light of my soul and idol of my heart, and I will labour night and day, without cessation, to render myself worthy of possessing the treasure which God has revealed to my dazzled eyes; and, poor and obscure as I am, I shall become rich and powerful."

"I have listened too long to words which a young girl ought to be deaf to; permit me, signore, to retire."

"Have pity upon me, my cruel enemy! What have I done that you should leave me thus, with despair in my soul? You know not that for several months I have followed you about like a shadow, that my nights are spent in roaming round your house, stifling my sighs lest they should disturb your peaceful slumbers. You dread, perhaps, to allow yourself to be softened, at the first interview, by an unfortunate who adores you. Alas! Juliet was young and fair as you, and she was not long in having pity upon Romeo."

Nisida cast a sad and thoughtful look upon the handsome young man who was talking so sweetly to her, and retired without any further reply, in order not to humiliate his misery.

The prince found great difficulty in overcoming a violent disposition to laugh; and, quite satisfied with his beginning, he returned to the place where he had left his servant.

The young girl did not close her eyes the whole night, after the conversation which she had had with the stranger. His sudden appearance, his strange dress, and fine language, had aroused a strange sentiment which slumbered at the bottom of her heart. She was then in all the bloom of her youth and the splendour of her beauty. Nisida did not possess one of those feeble and fearing natures broken by suffering, or treated with despotic tyranny. Far from this being the case, all that surrounded her had contributed to render her calm and serene; her tender and artless mind was developed in an atmosphere of happiness and peace. If she had never been loved until then, it was not to be attributed to coldness, but to the excessive timidity of the inhabitants of the island. The blind and deep respect with which the old fisherman was surrounded had marked a circle of reverence and submission around his daughter which no one dared to endeavour to break through. By hard labour and rigid economy Solomon had amassed sufficient wealth to soften the poverty of the other fishermen. None had asked Nisida from him, for no one believed himself worthy of possessing her. The only one of her adorers who had dared to show his love for her openly was Bastiano, Gabriel's dearest and most devoted friend, but Bastiano did not please her at all. Confident in her beauty, and held up by some mysterious hope which never abandons youth, she resolved to wait, like a king's daughter who expects her bridegroom from a strange country.

Upon Assumption-day she had left her native home for the first time in her life, fate having appointed her one of the young girls dedicated by their mothers to the special service of the Virgin. But, overcome by a part so new to her, blushing and confused, from the looks of an immense crowd, she had scarcely dared to raise her astonished eyes, and the beauties of the city had passed before her like a dream, of which she retained but a vague remembrance.

When she saw the handsome young man under her window, with his elegant and graceful shape and his noble air, contrasting so strongly with the timidity and awkwardness of her other lovers, she felt an inward pain stealing over her, and she would doubtless have believed that her prince had at length arrived, if she had not been disagreeably struck by the poverty of his dress. Nevertheless, she listened for a long time for his return, and retired with flushed cheeks, and an oppressed breast: the poor girl would have died with terror, had she known the truth.

"If my father does not wish me to marry," said she to herself, agitated by the first remorse of her life, "it would be ungrateful in me to speak of it; but he is so handsome!"

Then kneeling down before the Virgin, who was her only confidant, the poor girl having never known a mother, she endeavoured to express in words the torments of her mind; but she found that she could never reach the conclusion of her prayer. Conflicting thoughts perplexed her mind, and she found herself pronouncing words which had no reference to her subject. She however rose from her knees, with a heart more at rest, and decided upon confiding all to her father.

"I have no reason to doubt my father's affection for a moment," said she to herself, as she prepared for rest. "Well then! if he forbid me to speak of him, it will be for my own good; at any rate, it is the first time that ever I saw him," continued she, throwing herself upon her bed, "and now that I recollect what took place, I was very bold to address him as I did; I have almost a wish to amuse myself with laughing at him. With what assurance he uttered his idle tales; how ridiculously he rolled his eyes about; and yet how handsome are his eyes, his mouth, his forehead, and his hair! How is it that I cannot go to sleep! why does this young man's face thus haunt me? I do not wish to see him more!" cried she, covering her head with the bedclothes in childish anger. She then began to laugh at her lover's dress, and reflected deeply how she should tell her companions of what had happened. Suddenly, her face became sad, a frightful thought stole over her mind, and she trembled rom head to foot: "If he should find another more beautiful than myself; men are such deceivers! How warm it is! I am sure I shall not be able to sleep all night."

She continued in this manner changing from hopes to fears, until the first ray of morning, shining through the jasmine-branches which shaded her window, quivered upon the walls of the room. Then hastily rising, she presented herself as usual before her father, to receive his parental kiss. The old man instantly noticed the languor and fatigue, which a sleepless night had rendered visible upon his daughter's face, and inquired anxiously, as he removed the beautiful black hair, which half concealed her cheeks,

"What ails you my daughter, you have not slept well?"

"I have not slept at all," answered Nisida, smiling to reassure her father, "but I have a confession to make."

"Speak on quickly, my daughter, I die of impatience."

"Perhaps I have done wrong, but I know well, that you will promise not to chide me, before I begin."

"I fear you know too well that I spoil you," said the old man caressing her, "but I will not begin to be severe with you to-day."

"A young man who is not of this island, whose name I do not know, spoke to me last night, as I was taking the air at my casement."

"And what had he to say to you, my dear Nisida?"

"He begged me to speak to you in his favour."

"Say on then. What can I do for him?"

"Command me to become his wife."

"And would you willingly obey?"

"Yes, father, I think I should," answered the girl, candidly, "but you will settle it yourself, according to your wisdom, for I determined to tell all to you, before becoming acquainted with him, that I might not carry on a conversation, of which you would disapprove. But is there any objection?"

"You know that I am not yet aware, whether he is actuated with a desire to make my daughter happy."

"He is poor, my father."

"Well, well; for that reason I should not love him less. There is plenty of work here for all, and my table could easily make room for a third child. He is young, has arms, and doubtless some occupation."

"He is a poet."

"No matter; bid him speak to me, and if he is a worthy lad, depend upon me, my child, to do all in my power to hasten your happiness."

Nisida embraced her father with gratitude, and burnt with impatience for the approach of evening, when she might give her lover such delightful intelligence. Eligi de Brancaleone, it will be believed, was not much flattered with the fisherman's magnanimity in his favour; but he nevertheless feigned to be enchanted with the success of his suit. Not forgetting for a moment the part which he had assumed of an enthusiastic student and poet, he fell upon his knees and eloquently declaimed a fervent thanksgiving to the star of Venus. Then addressing his innocent dupe, he proceeded to inform her more calmly, that he would immediately write to his own father, who, at the expiration of a week, would himself make a formal proposal for her hand. Until then, he begged not to be presented to Solomon, alleging the shame he felt from appearing in such poor clothes, assuring his betrothed that his father would bring him a complete equipment for his marriage day.

While the unfortunate girl was thus, with such fearful certainty, walking towards the brink of the abyss, Trespolo, according to his master's commands, had taken up his abode in the island as a pilgrim from Jerusalem. Playing his part to admiration, and interlarding his conversation with biblical phrases, he distributed amulets, pieces of wood from the true cross, and all the inexhaustible treasures, which nourish the holy avarice of superstition. These relics were looked upon as the more authentic, from his making no traffic of them; as, supporting his poverty meekly, he presented them freely to the faithful, refusing all alms in return. He consented, however, on account of the tried virtue of Solomon, to partake of the fisherman's bread; and each day he took his meals at his house with the regularity of a monk. His abstinence astonished every one; a dry crust soaked in water, and a few nuts or figs, were sufficient to support the holy man's life, or, in other words, to prevent him from dying. He amused Nisida with stories of his travels and mysterious prophecies; but unfortunately he never visited them until the evening, as he passed the remainder of the day in macerations and prayers; that is to say, in consoling himself in secret for the frugality which he practised in public, by employing his time by turns in eating, drinking, and sleeping.

On the morning of the seventh day after the promise which the prince had made to the fisherman's daughter, Brancaleone entered his valet's apartment, and shaking him violently, shouted in his ear,

"Awake, you odious hedgehog!"

Trespolo suddenly awoke, rubbing his eyes with terror. The dead, peacefully reposing in their coffins, could hardly be more startled by the last trumpet announcing the end of all things, than was Trespolo at his master's voice. Fear having however completely dissipated his drowsiness, he sat up on his bed, and inquired with a startled air—

"What is the matter, your excellency?"

"The matter is, that I will have you flayed alive, if you do not overcome your execrable habit of sleeping twenty hours out of the twenty-four."

"I was not asleep, my prince!" cried the domestic, with cool effrontery, leaping at the same time from his bed; "I was only thinking."

"Listen to me," said the prince, sternly; "you have been, if I remember rightly, in the employment of an apothecary?"

"Yes, my lord, but I gave it up, my master having had the signal barbarity to employ me in pounding drugs, which tired my arms

a phial containing a solution of opium."

"Mercy!" cried Trespolo, falling upon his knees.

"Get up, idiot, and pay attention to what I tell you. This little fool, Nisida, insists upon my speaking to her father. I have made her believe that I am going away to-night, to bring my papers. There is no time to lose. You are intimately acquainted with the fisherman. Manage to introduce this liquor into their wine; but remember that your life shall be the forfeit if you put more into the dose than is necessary to produce a deep sleep. Take care to have a good ladder in readiness to-night, after which await my coming in my boat, where you will find Numa and Bonaroux. These are my commands. I shall have no need of your assistance in the attack. I had my dagger of Campo Basso."

"But, my lord," began Trespolo, thunderstruck.

"No difficulties," cried the prince, stamping his foot violently, "or, by my father's death, I will rid you of your scruples, for once and for all." And he turned upon his heel, with the manner of a man who knew that his orders dared not be disobeyed.

The unfortunate Trespolo fulfilled his master's injunctions to the letter. He obeyed nevertheless in the most overwhelming terror. Upon that evening the fisherman's supper passed off sadly, notwithstanding the attempts of the pretended pilgrim to enliven it with forced gaiety. Nisida was filled with grief at her lover's departure, and Solomon, sharing his daughter's low spirits, had only swallowed a few mouthfuls of wine, in compliance with the repeated entreaties of his guest. Gabriel had set off upon that morning for Sorrento, accompanied by Bastiano, and was not expected back for two or three days; and his son's absence increased the old man's sadness. As soon as Trespolo had retired, the fisherman, overcome by fatigue, gave way to sleep; and Nisida, with her arms hanging at her sides, and her head aching and giddy, had scarcely strength to go up to her room, and, after mechanically lighting her lamp, to throw herself upon her bed, where she lay as pale and stiff as a corpse.

The storm raged furiously, one of those dreadful storms only to be witnessed in the south, when the amassed clouds suddenly bursting, discharge such torrents of rain and hail upon the earth, that a second deluge appears to be approaching. The rolling of the thunder came nearer and nearer, until it resembled the noise of a cannonade. The bay, usually so calm and unruffled, that the island seemed as though it looked upon its own beauties in a mirror became suddenly black, and immense waves hurled themselves furiously against the shore; so that the whole island seemed to tremble beneath their terrible shocks.

The most intrepid fishermen had drawn their boats on land, and, shut up in their cabins, were endeavouring, as well as they could, to reassure their wives and frightened children.

In the midst of the profound darkness which reigned upon the sea, the lamp which Nisida had left burning before the Madonna, might have been seen shining bright and clearly in the increasing gloom.

Two boats, without rudder, sails or oars, were at this time tossing about in the waves and beaten by the tempestuous wind; in each of these boats stood a man with his breast bare and hair waving in the gale. They held by each other's hands to keep their boats together, looking upon the sea with firm hearts, and braving the tempest gallantly.

"Once again," cried one of these men, "let me try, Gabriel; and I warrant that, with my two broken oars, and a little perseverance, I shall gain Torre before morning."

"You are mad, Bastiano; this whole day we had but reached as far as Vico, and have been obliged to run on shore; not even your strength and courage can do any thing against this fearful hurricane, which has driven us back almost to our starting-place."

"It is the first time that you ever refused to accompany me," remarked the young man.

"I confess it, my dear Bastiano; I do not know why, but to-night I feel drawn towards the island by some irresistible power. The winds are unchained to render our rowing useless; and I declare to you, although you may think me mad in doing so, that I cannot help recognising a command from heaven in this simple and usual circumstance. Do you see that lamp gleaming yonder in the distance?"

"I know it," answered Bastiano, stifling a sigh.

"That lamp was lit before the Virgin, upon the day of my sister's birth, and for eighteen years it has been kept burning night and day. It was my mother's wish. You know not, my dear Bastiano, you cannot know, how many saddening thoughts that wish recalls to my mind. My poor mother summoned me to her deathbed, and told me a fearful story, a horrible mystery, which weighs upon my soul like lead, and from which I can never ease myself by confiding it to a friend. When her dreadful tale was finished, she demanded to see and embrace my new-born sister; and then attempted with her own trembling hand to light the lamp we speak of. 'Remember,'—these were her last words,—'remember, Gabriel, that your sister is devoted to the Madonna. So long as this lamp shall continue burning before the holy image, your sister shall remain secure from all dangers.' You can now understand why, whenever we two are out upon the bay, my eyes are always fixed upon that lamp. I have a belief, that no evil will happen to her as long as it continues burning, but upon the day on which it is extinguished, on that same day my sister's soul will take its flight to heaven."

"Well," cried Bastiano, in a blunt voice, which was intended to conceal the emotion of his heart, "if you prefer remaining, I will go alone."

"Adieu!" said Gabriel, letting go of his comrade's hand, without turning his eyes away from the light, to which he felt himself attracted by a fascination, which he could not explain. Bastiano disappeared, and Nisida's brother, assisted by the waves, rapidly approached nearer and nearer to the shore. Suddenly, he uttered a terrible cry, which was heard above all the noise of the tempest.

The light had disappeared; the lamp was extinguished.

"My sister is dead!" cried Gabriel, and plunging into the sea, he fought his way through the billows with the rapidity of a thunderbolt.

The storm redoubled in violence; long flashes of lightning, bursting from the overcharged clouds, illumined the wild scene with fitful and intermittent splendour. The fisherman, perceiving a ladder placed against the wall of their dwelling, seized it with a convulsive grasp, and in three bounds was in his sister's chamber. The prince had felt a singular emotion in breaking into this chaste and silent retreat. The calm and placid look of the Virgin, who seemed to be partaking the repose of the sleeping girl, the spirit of innocence which pervaded the virginal couch, the lamp watching in the midst of darkness, like a soul in prayer, had all combined to introduce a hitherto unknown anxiety into the seducer's breast. Enraged by what he termed a contemptible absurdity, he extinguished the lamp, and was advancing towards the bed, reproaching himself with his weakness, when Gabriel rushed upon him with the fury of a wounded tiger.

Brancaleone, with a rapid and bold movement, which proved him to be a man of unusual bravery and address, shaking off the grasp of his robust adversary, drew a long and glittering poniard with his right hand. Gabriel smiled disdainfully, plucked it out of his hand, and having broken it over his knee, felled him to the ground with a tremendous blow upon the head; then casting a look of intense anxiety upon his poor sister, in the dubious glare of a flash of lightning,—

"Dead!" cried he, wringing his hands in despair, "dead!" In the frightful paroxysm, which almost choked him, he could find no other words with which to express his fury or pour out his misery. His hair, which hung matted over his cheeks, with exposure to the rain, actually crept with horror; the marrow in his bones turned cold, and he felt tears falling from his heart. It was a terrible moment; a moment in which his overwhelming misery made him forget that the assassin was yet alive.

In the mean time, the prince, whose admirable coolness had not failed him for a moment, rose from the ground, bleeding and bruised. Pale, and trembling with rage, he sought on all sides for a weapon, with which he could revenge himself. Gabriel approached him more gloomy and furious than before, and seizing him by the neck with a grasp of iron, he dragged him into the chamber occupied by the old man.

"My father! Oh! my father!" cried he, in a heartrending voice, "up and behold the villain who has assassinated Nisida!"

The old man, who had fortunately drunk but little of the soporific potion, was awoke by this cry, which pierced him to the soul; he sprang from his bed, threw on a part of his clothes, and with that promptitude of action with which God has endowed parents in moments of extremity, he ascended to his daughter's room, struck a light, and kneeling down by the side of the bed, he began feeling her pulse, and watching her respiration with mortal anxiety.

All this had passed in less time than it has taken us to tell it. Brancaleone, by a desperate effort, had escaped from the fisherman's grasp, and, suddenly regaining his princely dignity, he said in a loud voice,

"You will not slay without hearing me."

Gabriel in vain endeavoured to reply in words of hatred and revenge; his tongue refused to do its office, and he melted into tears.

"Your sister is not dead," said the prince, with cold dignity, "she is but asleep. You may go and assure yourself of the truth of what I say, and during your absence, I pledge you my honour, that I will not move a step from this place."

These words were pronounced with such an accent of truth, that the fisherman was struck by them. A ray of unexpected hope suddenly illuminated his face; but he continued to throw looks of hatred and mistrust upon the stranger, and murmured in a hollow voice,

"Do not flatter yourself,—whether or no, you do not escape me."

He then went up to his sister's room, and approached the old man trembling from head to foot.

"Well, my father?"

Solomon gently pushed him from the bedside, with a mother's solicitude, who drives away some buzzing insect from her infant's cradle, and signing to him to be silent, he answered in a low whisper:

"She is neither dead nor poisoned; some one has given her a philter to drink, with a sinister design. Her respiration is regular, and she will not be long in waking from her lethargy."

Gabriel, reassured concerning Nisida's life, descended silently to the ground floor where he had left the seducer. His attitude was grave and gloomy; he was not now come to rend his sister's murderer, but to clear up a treacherous and infamous mystery, and to avenge his outraged honour. He opened the folding-doors by which the house was entered; the rain had ceased to descend, and the moon's rays, bursting through the clouds, suddenly penetrated into the room. The fisherman adjusted his disordered dress, dried his hair, advanced towards the stranger, and after looking at him fiercely,—

"Now," said he, "you will explain to me the reason of your presence in our house."

"I confess," said the prince, in an easy tone, and with the most insolent coolness, "that appearances are against me. It is the fate of lovers to be treated like thieves; but, although I have not the pleasure of being known to you, you will find that I am the betrothed of your fair sister, Nisida, with the consent of your father. Unhappily, I have the misfortune to have parents, who have had the cruelty to refuse their consent; love blinded me and I was guilty of a fault, to which a young man like you ought to be indulgent; at the most, it was but a simple scheme to carry her off, with the best intentions in the world, I assure you, and I am quite ready to repair every thing, if, by so doing, you will consent to hold out your hand and call me your brother."

"Call you my brother, villain and traitor!" answered Gabriel, whose cheek glowed at hearing his sister spoken of with such insolence; "if it is thus that injuries and insults are revenged in town, we fishermen have a different plan to show you. Ah! you flattered yourself you would succeed in carrying desolation and shame into our house; by paying infamous wretches to come and eat the bread of an old man, and to poison his daughter in return; by creeping in the darkness of night, armed with a poniard like a brigand, into my sister's chamber; and by hoping to leave it accompanied by the most beautiful woman in the kingdom."

The prince made a movement of impatience.

"Listen," continued Gabriel, "I could this instant destroy you in the same manner as I have broken your dagger; but I take pity upon you. I perceive well that you cannot employ your hands either for your subsistence or your defence. Pshaw! I begin to understand you: you boast yourself my master; you have usurped your poverty, but you are not worthy of it."

He threw upon the prince a look of withering scorn, then approaching a cupboard concealed in the wall, he drew from it a hatchet and a musket.

"Here," said he, "are all the arms in the house; choose."

A glance of pleasure shot from the eyes of the prince, who had until then been devoured with compressed passion; he eagerly seized the gun, and stepping back three paces, recovering all his dignity at the same time,—

"You would have done well," said he, "to have lent me this weapon at once; for by that means I should have been spared the fatigue of listening to your absurd vagaries and frantic convulsions. Thanks, young man; I will give directions to one of my servants to restore you your property. Adieu; here is something for your trouble."

And he threw him a purse, which fell heavily at the fisherman's feet.

"I lent you that gun to defend yourself with," said Gabriel, motionless with astonishment.

"Make room, my lad, you are drunk," said the prince, taking a step towards the door.

"You refuse then to defend yourself?" inquired Gabriel, resolutely.

"I have already said that I cannot fight with you."

"And why not?"

"Because God has so willed it; because you were born to cringe, and I to trample you beneath my feet; because all the blood which I could shed upon this island would not recompense me for the loss of a single drop of mine; because the lives of a thousand wretches, such as you, would not be worth an hour of mine; because you will throw yourself upon your knees at the very name which I am about to pronounce; finally, because you are but a poor fisherman, and I am the Prince of Brancaleone."

At this well-known name, which the young nobleman had uttered with the expectation of humbling his opponent to the dust, the fisherman started convulsively. He breathed freely, as if some overwhelming weight, which had long oppressed his heart, had been suddenly removed.

"Ah!" cried he, "are you at length in my power, my lord? Between the poor fisherman and the mighty prince there is a debt of blood. You shall pay for yourself and for your father. We will now settle our accounts, your excellency," continued he, raising his hatchet above the prince's head, who presented the gun, which he held in his hand, to defend himself.

"Oh! you were too hasty in your choice; the weapon is not loaded."

The prince turned pale.

"There exists between our two families," continued Gabriel, "a horrible mystery, which my mother confided to me, upon the brink of the tomb, of which my father himself is ignorant, and which no man on earth shall ever know. With thee it is different, for you are about to die."

He dragged him into the courtyard.

"Do you know why my sister, she whose dishonour you have been planning, was devoted to the service of the Madonna? It was because your father wished to effect for my mother, what you in your turn have attempted upon the daughter. There is in your accursed house an infamous tradition, which I am about to relate to you. You know not what slow and terrible tortures my unfortunate mother endured, tortures which destroyed her, which brought her to an early grave, and which her angelic soul dared to confide to her son only at the moment of its departure, and even then that the relation might make me keep a stricter watch over my sister when she was gone."

The fisherman wiped away a tear, and continued:

"One day, before my sister or myself were born, a beautiful lady, richly dressed, arrived upon this island in a magnificent boat; she asked to see my mother, who was in those days as fair as my Nisida now is. She appeared never to grow weary of admiring her, accusing fate of hiding so fine a diamond in such an obscure island. She loaded my mother with praises, gifts, and caresses, and finally requested the leave of her parents to let her accompany her as her companion. The poor people, foreseeing, in the protection of so great a lady, a brilliant prospect for their daughter, had the weakness to consent. That lady was your mother; and the reason she came in search of this poor innocent young girl was this: your mother had a lover, and she wished by this infamous means, to earn the indulgence of the prince her husband.

"Be silent, wretch!"

"Oh! you must hear me to an end, your excellency. The first few days my poor mother found herself surrounded with the most tender attentions; the princess was never absent from her for a moment; the most flattering words and the finest clothes were hers, and the domestics respected her as if she had been their master's daughter. When her parents came to visit her, to question her, if she regretted having left them, they found her looking so beautiful and so happy, that they blessed the princess as a good angel whom God had sent to them. The prince then began to show a singular affection for my mother, and by degrees his manner became more familiar and caressing. The princess now absented herself for several days, regretting her inability to take her dear child (as she was always termed) with her, where she was going. From this time, the prince's brutality knew no bounds; he no longer disguised his shameful project of seduction; he tempted the poor girl with pearl bracelets and diamond necklaces; he passed from the most ardent passion to the deepest rage, from the humblest prayers to the most horrible threats. They shut up the unfortunate girl in a dungeon, to which but one feeble ray of light found entrance; and a frightful gaoler threw her every morning a piece of black bread for her day's subsistence, swearing to her, every time he thus saw her, that her situation would not be changed until she became the prince's mistress. This punishment lasted two years. The princess was gone for a long voyage to foreign countries, and my mother's parents believed their daughter to be still happy in the enjoyment of her protection. Upon her return, having, doubtless, new faults requiring pardon, she reproached the prince with his bad management, she summoned my mother from her dungeon, feigned the most lively indignation at the horrible way in which she had been treated, of which she pretended ignorance, wiped away her tears, and with a refinement of abominable perfidiousness, she received the thanks of the victim she was about to immolate.

"One evening—I have nearly finished, my lord—the princess and her companion supped together *tête-à-tête:* the rarest fruits, the most exquisite meats, and the most delicate wines, were served to my poor mother, whose long privations had ruined her constitution and weakened her reason. At this supper, they mixed diabolical philters with her drink; it is still a tradition in your family. My mother felt excited; her eyes shone with feverish brightness, her cheeks were flushed as though they were on fire. At this moment the prince entered.—Oh! your excellency has already seen to-night that God protects the poor.......My mother flew for refuge, like a frightened dove, upon the princess's bosom, who laughingly repulsed her. The poor girl, lost, trembling and in tears, threw herself upon her knees, in the middle of that infamous room. It was the day of Saint Anne: suddenly the house shook, the walls cracked, and cries of distress were heard proceeding from the street below. My mother was saved! It was the earthquake, which destroyed the half of Naples. You know well, my lord, that your old palace was rendered uninhabitable from that day."

"To what does all this lead?" cried Brancaleone, in the greatest agitation.

"Oh! simply to persuade you that you must fight with me," answered the fisherman coldly, handing him a charge for his gun as he spoke: "and now," continued he, in a higher tone, "pray to God, my lord; for, I warn you that you shall die by my hand: justice must be done!"

The prince carefully examined the powder and balls, convinced himself that his gun was in a fit condition for use, loaded it, and, eager to have the affair settled, took aim at the fisherman; but either from the agitation of his mind caused by his adversary's terrible story, or from the grass being in a slippery condition from the storm of the preceding night, as he advanced his left foot to take more deliberate aim, his foot slipped, and losing his equilibrium, he fell upon his knee, and the gun was discharged into the air.

"That does not count, my lord," cried Gabriel, handing him a second charge.

At the noise of the explosion, Solomon appeared at the window, and instantly understanding to what it related, he raised his hands to heaven, as if addressing a mute and fervent prayer to God.

Eligi swore a fearful oath and reloaded his weapon in haste; but, struck by the young man's boldness, who remained fixed and motionless before him, by the calm and dignified old man, who seemed to be entreating God, in the name of his paternal authority, to declare himself upon the side of the innocent; disconcerted by his fall, his knees trembling, he felt the coldness of death in his veins. Nevertheless, endeavouring to master his agitation, he fired a second time; the ball whistled past the fisherman's ear, and buried itself in the trunk of a poplar-tree.

The prince grasped the barrel of the gun in both hands with despairing energy; but Gabriel advanced armed with his hatchet, and at the first blow, cut the butt end completely off. He hesitated, however, to slay a defenceless man, and was in uncertainty how to act, when two armed servants appeared at the end of the road. Gabriel had not observed their approach; but when the two traitors had almost reached him, Solomon uttered a cry, and rushed to his son's rescue.

"Help, Numa! help, Bonaroux! death to the brigands! they wish to assassinate me!"

"You lie, Prince of Brancaleone," cried Gabriel, and with one blow of his hatchet he clove his adversary's skull.

The two bravoes, who had arrived to defend their master, took to flight upon seeing him fall. Solomon and his son went up to Nisida's room. The young girl at that moment awoke from her deep sleep; her brow was covered with sweat, and she slowly opened her eyes upon their entrance.

"Why do you look on me so earnestly, my father?" said she, with a look of bewilderment, passing her hand across her forehead.

The old man embraced her tenderly.

"You have this night escaped from a great danger, my poor Nisida," said he; "get up and let us return thanks to the Madonna."

Accordingly the father and his two children, prostrating themselves before the image of the holy Virgin, began reciting the litany.

But at the same moment the sound of arms was heard in the courtyard, the house was filled with soldiers, and a lieutenant of gendarmerie, seizing Gabriel, addressed him loudly in these words:

"In the name of the law I arrest you for the murder committed by you upon the person of his most illustrious excellency, the Prince of Brancaleone."

Nisida, upon hearing these fearful words, became as pale and motionless as a marble statue. Gabriel was preparing himself for a desperate and useless resistance, when he was stopped by a gesture from his father.

" *Signor tenente*," said the old man, addressing himself to the officers, " my son has killed the prince in lawful defence ; last night he scaled the wall and entered our house with a dagger in his hand. The proofs are before your eyes. There is the ladder placed against the window, and here," continued he, picking up two pieces of broken steel, " is a dagger engraved with the arms of Brancaleone. Nevertheless, we do not refuse to follow you."

The last words of the fisherman were drowned in cries of " *Down with the sbirri! down with the gendarmes!* " which were repeated upon all sides. The whole island was in arms, and the fishermen would have spilt their heart's blood before they would have allowed a single hair of Solomon or of his son to be injured.

But the old man appeared upon the threshold of his door, and stretching out his arms, with a calm and grave gesture, which instantly calmed the fury of the people,—

" Thanks, my children," said he, " the law must be respected. I will myself defend my son's innocence before the judges."

Three months have scarcely passed, from the day when we first saw the old fisherman seated at the door of his house, himself happy in the happiness which he had diffused around him, throned like a king upon his rock, and blessing his two children, the fairest of the island. All is now changed, in the fate of this once fortunate and envied man. The little smiling cottage, which hung over the beautiful bay, like a swan upon the banks of a transparent river, is sad and desolate; the courtyard, surrounded with its hawthorn hedge, is silent and deserted, and the happy groups, who resorted to the fisherman's home at the close of the day, are there no more. No noise disturbs the gloom of that mournful solitude, except towards evening, the murmuring of the waves of the sea, breaking with plaintive sounds upon the strand, as if pitying the misfortunes of that once happy dwelling.

Gabriel is condemned. The news of the death of the noble prince of Brancaleone, so young, so handsome, and so universally adored, not only agitated the Neapolitan aristocracy, but enraged all classes, from the highest to the lowest. He was mourned by all ; and a general cry of vengeance was raised against the murderer.

Nevertheless, the magistrates, appointed by their office to try this deplorable affair, acted with irreproachable integrity. No consideration foreign to their duty, no regard due to the noble and powerful family of the slain man, could stifle the conviction of their consciences. History has retained the memory of this celebrated trial, and she has no reproach to address to these men, which are not equally made to human laws. Appearance, that fatal instrument with which the genius of evil so frequently controverts the truth, was against the innocent, and the poor fisherman was condemned to die.

Trespolo, whose scruples had all been dissipated by his fears, was first interrogated, as the young prince's confidential domestic ; he declared, with cool impudence, that his illustrious master, wishing to rid himself for a few days from the importunities of a young lady, whose love began to weary him, had taken up his abode for a short time upon the island of Nisida, with three or four of his most trusted domestics, and that he himself had taken the disguise of a pilgrim, not wishing to betray his excellency's incognito to the fishermen, who would have beset so powerful a person with their solicitations. Two rural guards, who were at the time of the murder upon the top of the hill, confirmed the valet's long deposition by their evidence; concealed by the underwood, they had seen Gabriel strike the prince, and had distinctly heard the last words of the dying man calling murder. All the witnesses, not even excepting those who were called in the prisoner's favour, only aggravated his position by their evidence. It was proved, for the accusation, that the prince Eligi de Brancaleone, having become disgusted with a town life, had visited the little island of Nisida to enjoy his favourite amusement of fishing (proof being given that the young prince, for the last two years, had always been present at the tunny fishing upon his estates at Palermo); that, while residing there, Gabriel had recognised him, having seen him a few days before in Naples, where he accompanied his sister to the procession on Assumption-day, and had doubtless formed a scheme to assassinate him. Upon the day preceding the night upon which the crime had been committed, Gabriel's absence, and his father and sister's agitation had been remarked. Towards evening the prince had dismissed his attendants, to walk alone, as was his usual custom, upon the sea-beach. Surprised by the storm, and not knowing his way about the island, he had wandered round the fisherman's house, in search of an entrance; when Gabriel, encouraged by the darkness, and the noise of the storm, which would drown his victim's cries, after a long hesitation, had decided upon committing the crime, and having discharged a gun twice at the unfortunate young man, without effecting his object, he had killed him with a blow from a hatchet; that, exactly at the moment when, assisted by Solomon, he was about to throw the corpse into the sea, the prince's retainers having appeared, they went up to the girl's room, and, having planned their incredible story, they knelt before the Virgin, to put on an appearance of innocence in order to render their defence the more probable. All the circumstances which poor Solomon brought forward in his son's favour turned against him: the ladder placed against Nisida's casement was the property of the fisherman himself; the poniard which young Brancaleone always carried about with him for his defence, had been evidently taken after his death, and Gabriel had hastened to break it, to remove, as far as was in his power, the traces of his crime. Bastiano's evidence received no weight: he proved, in order to destroy the proof of the premeditation of the crime, that the prisoner had not left him until the commencement of the storm; but the young diver was known as Gabriel's dearest friend, and the boldest suitor for his sister's hand, besides which, at the same hour, when he affirmed that he had been in the neighbourhood of Nisida, he had been observed landing at Torre. As to the prince's passion for the poor peasant-girl, this ridiculous assertion obtained no credence whatever, more especially the resistance attributed to the young girl, and the extreme means resorted to by the prince to weaken her virtue. Eligi de Brancaleone was so young, handsome, and seducing, that no one would have ever suspected him of violence, except in getting rid of his mistresses. And, finally, as an overwhelming and unanswerable reply to all the arguments for the defence, a purse of gold, having the arms of Brancaleone worked upon it, was discovered under the fisherman's bed, which the prince had thrown, as our readers will remember, as a last insult at Gabriel's feet.

The old man was not discouraged at this dreadful conjunction of appearances against him. After the pleadings of the advocates, whose eloquence he had purchased, he himself defended his son, and threw into his speech, so much truth, passion, and tears, that all present were affected, and three of the judges voted for the prisoner's acquittal, but the majority were against it, and Gabriel was condemned.

This melancholy news spread rapidly through the little island, and caused the deepest grief throughout it. The fishermen, who, upon the first irruption of the military, had taken up arms for the defence of their comrade, submitted without a murmur to the sentence, after the affair had been tried. Solomon bore this piercing blow, which passed through his heart like the stroke of a dagger, without a sigh escaping from his breast, without a tear falling from his eyes; his wound did not bleed. Upon the day of his son's arrest, he had sold every thing that he possessed, even from the little silver cross, his wife's dying legacy, to the pearl necklace which had so often flattered his paternal pride, when he saw the whiteness of the jewels lost in the pureness of his dear Nisida's neck; he had placed the proceeds of the sale of his property, in his woollen cap, and set off for the capital. He ate only the morsels of bread, thrown to him by pitying passers by, and he slept upon the steps of churches, or upon the threshold of the court.

To appreciate the heroic courage of this unfortunate father at its true value, the whole extent of his misfortune must be viewed. The death of his son was not the only grief which was wringing the martyr's breast; weakened by years and misery, he knew that his son would only precede him by a few days to the tomb. His most bitter anguish, was the thought of his family's shame; the first gallows which had ever been erected upon that island, of such gentle manners, such rigid virtue, and such honourable poverty, would be raised for Gabriel, and the ignominious punishment would be reflected upon the whole population, and would brand his forehead with infamy. By a melancholy, yet too easy transition in human destiny, the poor father now longed for those moments of danger which used to make him tremble,—dangers, in which his son might meet an honourable grave; and now all was lost; a long life of labour, self-denial and benevolence; a pure and spotless reputation, which extended even to distant countries; the traditional admiration of several generations, who had almost worshipped him; all these but served to make the abyss the deeper, into which the fisherman had fallen in one day, from his almost regal grandeur; his reputation, without which life is not worthy of being endured, had disappeared; none would defend the murderer's father, all would condemn him; his very name would be pronounced with horror, and Nisida, poor orphan, would be regarded by every one but as the felon's sister.

When all delays were finished, and all poor Solomon's hopes had been successively destroyed, it was observed that a strange smile was generally upon his face, as if he was beset by some secret thought, and it became remarked about the city, that the old man had lost his reason.

Gabriel rose upon his last morning, with serenity and calmness. He had slept well, and awoke filled with a strange happiness; a bright sunbeam falling through his grated window, trembled upon the straw upon which he lay; and he felt an unaccountable sense of freshness and joy pervading his whole being. The gaoler, who had treated him humanely, since he had been in his custody, struck by the cheerful expression of his face, hesitated for a moment, before announcing the clergyman's visit, unwilling to interrupt the poor prisoner's revery. Gabriel, however, received the intimation with joy; he conversed two hours with the good priest, and shed tears of happiness, upon receiving this final absolution. The priest left the prison, melted into tears, and loudly proclaiming, that never in his life had he known a soul so fair and pure, or more full of resignation and courage.

The fisherman was still absorbed in consoling thoughts when his sister entered. From the day of her brother's arrest, the poor girl, residing with an aunt, had never ceased accusing herself of all the misery which had taken place, and weeping at the feet of her holy patroness. Bending under her grief, like a lily beneath a storm, she remained for hours pale and motionless, with her tears trickling silently between her beautiful white fingers. When the time had come to embrace her brother for the last time, Nisida rose with the courage of a saint. She effaced all traces of her tears, braided her black hair, and clothed herself in a white robe; the unfortunate child even endeavoured to conceal her grief by an angelical deceit—she had the strength to smile! At the sight of her fearful paleness, Gabriel felt his heart grow cold, his eyes became dim, and he ran forward to meet her, forgetting the chain which fastened him to the pillar of his prison; he stumbled and would have fallen to the ground had not Nisida rushed forward and caught him in her arms. The young girl understood the cause of his agitation, and assured him that she was in good health. Fearful of reminding him of his terrible situation, she spoke with volubility of a thousand things, of her aunt, the beauty of the weather, and of the Madonna. In a short time she recovered her courage, a faint colour returned to her emaciated cheeks, and Gabriel, imposed upon by her efforts to appear well and cheerful, found her still beautiful, and thanked God in his heart for having spared that feeble creature. Nisida, as though she possessed the power of reading her brother's secret thoughts, approached him, and taking his hand, with an intelligent air, she murmured in a low voice,

"It is fortunate that our parent is absent; he will be retained in the city for two days. With us it is different, we are young, and have courage!"

The poor girl was trembling like an aspen-leaf.

"What will become of you, my poor Nisida?" sighed Gabriel.

"Oh! I will pray to the Madonna. Will she not protect us?" She paused, struck by her words, to which the circumstances seemed so cruelly to give the lie. But glancing at her brother, she continued in an animated voice, "Assuredly she will protect us. She appeared to me last night in a dream. She held her infant Jesus in her arms, and gazed upon me with a mother's tenderness. She wished to make us saints, for she loves us; but to be saints, Gabriel, you know that we must suffer."

"True, my sister; go then, and pray for me; shun those sad thoughts, which will but shake your firmness, and perhaps my own. Go, we shall see each other again on high, where our mother is expecting us; our mother whom you have never known, and to whom I will often speak of thee. Farewell, Nisida, we shall meet again in heaven!"

And he kissed her forehead tenderly.

The poor girl summoned all her strength to aid her in this dreadful moment. She walked towards the door with a firm step, and when she had reached it, she turned and waved her hand as a final adieu, preventing her agony from escaping by a nervous contraction of her whole frame; but when she was once more in the passage, a groan burst from her oppressed breast, and Gabriel, who heard it echoing through the vault, believed her heart had burst.

Then throwing himself upon his knees, and raising his hands to heaven, he cried,

"My sufferings are finished, I have now nothing left to live for. Thanks, God! you keep my father elsewhere; you would spare a poor old man a trial which is beyond his strength."

It was now noon, and after trying every possible means, and expending his gold to the last piece to obtain a remission of his son's sentence, Solomon the fisherman entered his son's dungeon. He was so prostrated with agony, that the prison guards were moved, and the gaoler wept as he closed the door behind him.

The old man remained motionless for some time, absorbed in contemplating his son. From the wild glance of his eye, it might have been guessed that some dark scheme was being at that moment planned in the fisherman's mind. He nevertheless appeared struck with Gabriel's beauty. Three months of confinement had restored to his skin the whiteness of which the sun had robbed it; his fine black hair fell in curls round his neck, and his sparkling eyes were fixed upon his father with a pensive expression. Never had that head appeared more beautiful than at this, the moment of its fall.

"Alas! my poor boy," said the old man, "there is no hope; you must die."

"I know it," answered Gabriel, in a tone of tender reproach; "it is not that which afflicts me just now. But you, why should you have added this interview to your sorrows? I had hoped—Why did you not stay in Naples!"

"In Naples," said the old man, "they have no pity; I threw myself at the king's feet, at every one's feet, but there is no pardon, no mercy for us."

"Well, my father, and what of it? why should I dread death? I dared it every day upon the sea. My greatest, my only torment, is the pain it gives to you."

"And I, thinkest thou, Gabriel, that my only grief is to see you die? Oh! that is but a separation of a few days; I shall soon rejoin you. But a more dreadful grief overpowers me. I, myself, am a strong man, but—"

He stopped, fearing that he had said too much; then, approaching his son, he continued, in a voice broken by convulsive sobs,

"Pardon me, my Gabriel, I am the cause of your death. I should have killed the prince with my own hand. In our country, children and dotards are not condemned to death. I am upwards of eighty years of age; I should have been pardoned; they told me as much when I implored them to pardon you; once again, forgive me, Gabriel; I thought my daughter was dead, and of nothing else; and I did not know the law."

"My father! my father!" cried Gabriel, tenderly, "why do you speak thus? I would have given my life a thousand times to add a day to yours.

Since you have the strength to be present at my last hour, have no fear; you shall not see me turn pale; your son shall be worthy of yourself."

"And he must die!—die!" cried Solomon, striking his forehead with the most frantic despair.

"I am resigned, my father," said Gabriel, calmly; "did not Christ ascend to heaven upon the cross?"

"Yes," murmured the old man, gloomily, "but he did not leave behind him a sister dishonoured by his death."

These words, which escaped from the old fisherman, in spite of himself, threw a sudden and terrible light upon Gabriel's soul. For the first time, it entered into his mind, that his death would be infamous: he pictured the hooting populace, pressing around the scaffold, the hideous hand of the executioner, grasping him by the hair, and the stains of his blood falling upon his sister's white dress, and covering her with disgrace.

"Oh! that I had a weapon!" cried Gabriel, throwing his haggard eyes around him.

"The weapon is not wanting," answered Solomon, drawing forth a dagger, which had been concealed in his breast.

"Quick, then! kill me, my father!" said Gabriel in a low voice, but with an irresistible accent, of persuasion and entreaty—"yes! I confess to you that I dread the hand of the executioner. Nisida! poor Nisida! I have seen her, she was here, even now, as fair and white as the Madonna; she smiled to conceal her torments. She was happy, poor girl, because she thought you absent. Oh! it will be sweet to die by your hand! You gave me life, take it back, my father, it is the will of God,—and Nisida will be saved. Oh! do not hesitate; that would be base in us both; it is for my sister that I die, for your child that you slay me!"

And seeing that the old man was subdued by his earnest wish—

"Now," said he, "stab, my father!" And he offered his breast to the blow. The poor father raised his hand to strike; but a mortal convulsion shook his whole frame;—he fell into his son's arms, and they both melted into tears.

"My poor father!" said Gabriel, "I should have foreseen this. Give me the poniard and turn away your head; I am young, and my arm will not tremble."

"Oh no," replied Solomon, in a solemn tone; "no, my son; then you would be a suicide! Your soul must ascend pure and holy to heaven! God will give me strength. We have yet time!"

And a last ray of hope lit up the fisherman's face.

There now took place in this dungeon one of those scenes, which no words can describe, or pen relate. The poor father seated himself upon the straw by his son's side, and laid his head upon his knees. He smiled in the midst of his tears, like an infant, passing his hand slowly through his son's silky hair, he asked him a thousand questions, intermixed with a thousand caresses. To wean him from this world, he spoke unceasingly of the next. Then, by a sudden change, he questioned him minutely concerning all the circumstances of the past. He frequently paused in terror, and counted the beatings of his heart, as he remembered that the fearful moment was approaching.

"Tell me all, my child; have you any desire, any wish you would have gratified before you die? Do you leave any woman behind you whom you have loved in secret?"

"I have no one to regret here below, but you and my sister. You are the only persons whom I have loved, since my mother's death."

"It is well! comfort yourself, your sister shall be saved."

"Oh yes! I shall die happy."

"Do you pardon all your enemies?"

"With all my heart. I pray God to grant his pardon to the witnesses who have accused me. May he pardon me my sins."

"How old are you, Gabriel?" inquired the old man suddenly; for his reason as well as his memory began to fail him.

"Twenty-five years, upon All Saints' day."

"True; the day has been a sad one this year: you were in prison."

"Do you remember, it is just five years ago from this day, since I won the prize at the regatta at Venice?"

"Tell me about that, my boy."

And he listened, with clasped hands, outstretched neck, and open mouth. But the noise of steps was heard in the passage, and a heavy knock upon the door reminded the unfortunate pair that the fatal hour was come. The poor father had forgotten it.

The priests had sung the death psalm; the executioner was ready; the procession was about to set out, when Solomon the fisherman appeared suddenly upon the threshold of the prison, his eyes on fire, and his brow radiant with the glory of the patriarchs. The old man had recovered all his dignity, and raising the bloody knife above his head—

"The sacrifice is consummated," he cried in a sublime voice. "God has not sent his angel to stay the hand of Abraham!"

The crowd carried him away in triumph.*

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* The details of this story are kept in the archives of the *Corte Criminale* at Naples. We have altered neither the age nor the positions of the persons who appear in the story. One of the most celebrated advocates at the Neapolitan bar pronounced the acquittal of the old man.

THE MARCHIONESS OF BRINVILLIERS.

CHAPTER I.

It was upon a fine autumnal morning, towards the close of 1665, that a considerable crowd had assembled upon that part of the Pont Neuf which descends towards the Rue Dauphine. The object of their attention was a close carriage, the door of which a sub-officer endeavoured to open; whilst of four sergeants who were with him, two stopped the horses, as the others seized the coachman, who had only replied to their orders to draw up, by driving forwards at full gallop. They continued this struggle for some time, when suddenly one of the doors was violently opened, and a young officer in a cavalry uniform jumped out upon the pavement, closing the carriage immediately, though not so quickly as to hinder those who were nearest at the time, from distinguishing a female upon the back seat, who seemed, by the extreme care taken to hide her face and figure, to have the greatest interest in concealment.

"Sir," said the young man, addressing himself in a haughty and imperious tone to the officer; "as I presume, that unless by mistake, your business relates to me alone, I request you will acquaint me who, and what it is, that has empowered you to stop the carriage in which I was, and which, since I have left it, I demand may be allowed to continue on its progress unmolested."

"And first," replied the officer, without suffering himself to be intimidated by this tone and manner of the great lord; and intimating at the same time to his men still to detain the coach;—"First, have the goodness to answer me these questions."

"I am all attention," replied the youth, evidently retaining with the greatest difficulty his sang-froid.

"Are not you the Chevalier Gaudin de Sainte-Croix?"

"I am; captain in the regiment of Tracy."

"The same. Then I arrest you in the king's name."

"And upon what authority?"

"By that of this lettre de cachet."

The chevalier glanced rapidly over the paper, and recognising immediately the signature of the minister of police, seemed now to be mindful only of the lady who had remained in the carriage, and renewed therefore his first demand.

"Be it so, sir," replied he to the officer; "but observe, this lettre de cachet bears my name alone; and I repeat, gives you no authority to expose, as you have done, the person with whom I was to the gaze of public curiosity. I request then, you will no longer permit the detention of my carriage. As for myself, conduct me where you wish; I am prepared to follow."

This seemed to the officer a reasonable request; for he desired his officers to release the carriage, which immediately proceeded at a rapid rate through the crowd with the lady, who still seemed so entirely to absorb the attention of the prisoner.

Sainte-Croix, as he had promised, offered no resistance, and for a short time followed his conductor amid the mob, whose curiosity remained unabated; then, at the corner of the Quai de l'Horloge, a hackney-coach being drawn up, he entered it with the same haughty and disdainful air that he had hitherto maintained. The officer seated himself by his side, two of his sergeants got up behind, whilst the others, in accordance with the orders they had probably before received, withdrew, calling out to the coachman as they did so,

"To the Bastille."

The Chevalier Gaudin de Sainte-Croix was, according to some, the natural son of a French noble, whilst others asserted he was the child of poor parents, and being unable to endure the obscurity of his birth, had preferred a titled illegitimacy, and so denied what he really was. As to his birth, thus much was positively known: he was born at Montauban, and as to his present rank in the world, he was a captain in the regiment of Tracy. He might probably, at the period when this narrative commences, be about 28, or 30 years of age, and was then a handsome youth, with a countenance highly expressive and intellectual; a boon companion and a brave officer; very susceptible of the tender passion; jealous to madness, merely for a mistress, if she pleased him; prodigal as a prince, yet without a revenue; and sudden in quarrel, as those invariably are, who placed in a position to which they are not born, fancy that the slightest allusion to their origin is conceived in the desire to offend them.

Towards 1660, while serving in the army, Sainte-Croix had become acquainted with the Marquis de Brinvilliers, then a colonel in the regiment of Normandy. The equality of their age, the similarity of their professions, their qualities and defects, which were congenial; all alike tended to change a mere acquaintance into a sincere friendship, so that, upon the return of the army, the marquis presented Sainte-Croix to his wife, and he became domesticated in the family. This intimacy was productive of the usual results. The marchioness was then scarcely eighteen years of age. In 1651, about nine years prior to this period, she had married the marquis, who possessed an income of thirty thousand livres, to which she brought as dowery two hundred thousand in addition, besides what might accrue from any hereditary possessions.* At eighteen the marchioness was in all the splendour of her beauty; her figure was small, but exquisitely modelled; her well-formed rounded face was charmingly delicate, and her features the more regular, as, never affected by any internal emotion, they seemed like those of a statue, which, by some magic power, has been momentarily endowed with life; so that every one might mistake for the serenity of a pure mind, that cold and cruel impassibility, which was only the sign of remorse. Sainte-Croix and the marchioness, from the first, became mutually attached;—as for the marquis, whether it might be that he was blessed with that spirit of conjugal philosophy, without which there then was no good taste, or whether, absorbed in his own pursuits, he did not see, or was indifferent to the fact;—he betrayed no jealousy at this intimacy, and continued that reckless course of extravagance, by which he was already so much involved, until his embarrassments were so great, that the marchioness, who no longer loved him, and who abandoned herself entirely to her new passion, demanded and obtained a separation. She thereupon quitted her husband's house, and, observing no further restraint, lived openly in the society of Sainte-Croix.

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* She was named Marie Madeleine, had two brothers and a sister, and her father, M. Dreux d'Aubray, was "lieutenant civil" of the Chatelet at Paris.

This conduct, authorized moreover by the daily examples of the aristocracy, in no degree affected the marquis; he continued his ruinous career without the slightest concern about his wife's proceedings. But it was different with M. de Dreux d'Aubray, who retained the scruples of his order. Shocked at the conduct of his daughter, which might reflect disgrace upon his reputation, he obtained a lettre de cachet, authorizing the arrest of Sainte-Croix, wherever he might be found.

We have seen the manner in which this had been effected, at the moment when seated in the carriage with the marchioness, whom the reader has, no doubt, recognised as the lady so anxious to avoid the curiosity of the crowd. It will be readily conceived, how much self-restraint was requisite to master a temperament like that of Sainte-Croix's, upon being thus arrested in the open street: and although not one word escaped him whilst proceeding to the Bastille, it was hardly possible to conceal the storm of feeling that was gathering in his mind. He maintained, however, the calmness he had hitherto evinced, not only when he saw the fatal doors open and close upon him, which, like those of Dante's hell, desire the victim they swallow up to leave all hope behind him at their threshold, but even during his replies to the customary questions of the governor. His voice did not falter, nor did his hand shake, as he signed the register of his entry in the prison. This done, a jailer, after conducting him through a series of cold and humid corridors, where light might penetrate, but fresh air never, opened the door of a cell, into which he had barely entered, when the door closed upon him.

While the bolts harshly grated upon his ear, Sainte-Croix turned round as the rays of the moon streamed through the bars of a window at the height of about eight or ten feet: they fell upon a miserable bed, leaving the rest of the apartment in the deepest darkness. He stood for a moment anxiously listening to the echo of the retiring footsteps; then, feeling he was alone, and as if longer restraint would have been death, he flung himself upon his bed, with a cry like that of a wild beast, cursing men who tore him from the pleasures of his joyous life, and the Deity by whom it was permitted; and invoking every power, whatever might be its attributes, who would restore him to liberty and revenge. In a moment, as if his words had summoned him from the depths of earth, a form, tall, pale, and attenuated, with long dark hair, and clothed in a black doublet, slowly entered the circle of the sickly, bluish light, which fell around the window, and approached the bed on which Sainte-Croix was lying. Naturally brave, as he was, yet, so sudden was the apparition, so consequent upon his words, that at a period of belief in the mysteries of magic, Sainte-Croix did not doubt for a moment, but that the Evil One, who incessantly haunts the paths of men, had heard his prayer, and had appeared at his supplication. He raised himself upon his bed, feeling with his hand mechanically for the sword, whilst at every step of the mysterious being towards him, his hair stood on end, and a cold sweat hung in heavy drops upon his brow. At last the apparition stopped, his eyes fixed upon the prisoner's, who returned his gaze; then, in a deep tone of voice, he thus addressed him:

"Thou hast asked, young man, for the means to revenge thyself against man who proscribes, and to contend against God who abandons thee; those means I possess, and offer. Darest thou accept them?"

"But first," demanded Sainte-Croix, "who are you?"

"Why seekest thou to know who I may be,—since I am here at the moment thou invokest me, and bring thee what thou hast demanded?"

"It matters not," replied Sainte-Croix,—still under the impression, he was dealing with a supernatural agent,—"when one agrees to such a compact, it is indifferent with whom one acts."

"Well, then, since thou wishest to know me," replied the stranger, "I am the Italian, Exili."

Sainte-Croix shuddered; he awoke from an infernal dream to a terrible reality; for the name he had heard was fearfully celebrated, not only throughout France, but Italy.

Expatriated upon the suspicion of numerous murders by poison, of which it had been impossible to procure proof, Exili had come from Rome to Paris, where, as in his native country, he soon attracted the attention of the police; but here as before, they had been foiled in their attempts to convict the disciple of Renato, and La Tofana. But though legal proof was deficient, there was enough of moral evidence, to authorize his detention. A lettre de cachet was issued; Exili was consigned to the Bastille, and here he had been confined for six months, prior to the arrival of Sainte-Croix. Owing to the increase of the prisoners, the governor had introduced his new guest to the society of an earlier acquaintance, and associated Exili with Sainte-Croix, unaware that he was thus yoking together two demons.

Sainte-Croix then as we have seen, entered the chamber, and owing to its darkness, had not observed his messmate, but his imprecations revealing his hatred to Exili, he seized the opportunity of securing a powerful and devoted adherent, who free, might enable him to regain his own freedom, or at least revenge him, if the Bastille were destined to be his tomb. Sainte-Croix's repugnance to his companion soon passed away, and the skilful master acquired a deserving scholar. For the character of the latter, by its good and evil qualities, its strange union of virtuous and vicious principle, had now reached that period of life, when it is determined by the mastery of one or other of these incentives; had an angel met him in his path, he had probably conducted him to heaven, it was a demon he encountered, and he followed downward to destruction. Exili was no common practitioner, he was an adept in poisoning; a rival of the Medici, and the Borgias; to him murder had become an art, he had reduced it to fixed rules, and such was the elevation he had attained, that he pursued it less from interest, than from an irresistible love of experiment. Creation is an attribute of the Deity; destruction, the power he has committed unto man, who seeks therefore, to equal the Deity by destroying. Such was the pride of Exili; the pale and gloomy alchemist of the unseen void, who, abandoning to others the research into the mysteries of life, had discovered that of death.

Sainte-Croix for some time hesitated, but yielded at last to the raillery of his companion, who depicted the French as in general the victims of their own revenge, falling with their enemy, whilst they might survive, and triumph over his grave; he opposed to the bold and reckless act, which draws down upon the murderer a death more cruel than he himself inflicts, the craft of the Florentine, which smiles as it presents the deadly poison. He enumerated all those powders and liquids, of some of which it is the property to consume by slow degrees, and others, so rapid in their effects, that they strike down like the lightning, without time being given to their victims for the utterance of a cry. By degrees, Sainte-Croix felt an interest in this terrible game, which places the lives of all in the power of one. He profited at first by the experiments of Exili; then next conducted them himself, and at the expiration of a year, when he quitted the Bastille, the scholar was nearly the rival of his master. He re-entered society which had banished him, endowed with a fatal secret, by which he could inflict the misery he had endured. Soon after Exili was similarly released, and sought immediately Sainte-Croix, who hired an apartment for him in the name of his intendant, Martin de Breuilli, in a narrow street near the Place Maubert, belonging to a woman named Brunet. Whether the Marchioness de Brinvilliers had visited him during his detention is unknown, but it is certain that upon his freedom they were more intimate than before; but past experience had taught them what to fear. They resolved, therefore, to make an immediate trial of the science acquired by Sainte-Croix, and M. d'Aubray was selected by his daughter as the first victim. She by this means freed herself from a rigid censor, and the opponent of her pleasures, and repaired by her inheritance of his property, the fortune almost squandered by her husband. But a blow thus struck must be a decisive one: she wished, therefore, first to test the poison upon another. Whereupon, one morning, when her maid Françoise Roussel entered her room after breakfast, she gave her a slice of ham and some preserved gooseberries, that she might partake of them as her own. The poor girl without suspicion eat of what she had thus received, but hardly had she done so, than she was indisposed, feeling a great pain in her stomach, and as if her heart were pricked with pins; but she recovered, and the marchioness in consequence received from Sainte-Croix, after a few days, another and more efficacious poison.

The time for its trial arrived. M. d'Aubray went to pass the vacation at his villa of Offemont, whither his daughter offered to accompany him; and he believing her connexion with Sainte-Croix to be now entirely broken off, accepted her proposal with pleasure. Offemont was a place well adapted for the crime. Situated amid the forest of Aigne, about four leagues from Compiegne, poison might do its work before succour could arrive. M. d'Aubray set out with his daughter and a single servant; never had the marchioness before paid such sedulous attention to her father as she now did, and for his part her repentance seemed to have increased his affection. It was then too the marchioness availed herself of that fearful power over her emotions, of which her features never indicated a trace; ever by her father's side, sleeping in the room adjoining, taking her meals with him, incessant in the most affectionate attentions and the kindliest offices, allowing none to wait upon him but herself, and amid these cares, with her infamous project still resting upon her mind; yet maintaining a countenance so open and smiling, that not the most suspicious eye could have yet marked a lineament, but that of tenderness and devotion. It was thus she presented to her father a poisoned soup. He received it from her hands, she watched him as he partook of it, and upon face of bronze no sign appeared of the awful anxiety that must have compressed her heart. Then, when it was finished, she received without the slightest emotion the cup from his hand, and retired to her chamber, listening and awaiting the result. The effect was prompt. She heard her father utter some complaints and groan heavily; then, unable to endure the pain, call loudly upon his daughter. The marchioness entered.

But now her features betrayed the deepest anxiety, which M. d'Aubray sought to alleviate, considering it to be merely a slight indisposition, for which he was unwilling to procure medical skill. At last, however, his symptoms became so violent, the pain so unendurable, that he yielded to his daughter's entreaties, and gave orders to send for a physician. He came at eight the following morning, but only enabled to judge by the statement of M. d'Aubray, he considered it to be a fit of indigestion, prescribed accordingly, and returned to Compiegne. The marchioness now never quitted the invalid. Her bed was removed into his room; she declared she alone would tend him; and thus she could watch the progress and the final struggle between life and death, now exhibited in the sufferings of her father.

The physician came in the morning. M. d'Aubray was worse: his vomitings had ceased, but the pains in the stomach had become more acute, and a strange heat consumed his bowels; and he was advised a method of treatment which rendered necessary his return to Paris. He was, however, so weak, that he was doubtful whether it would not be better to stop at Compiegne; but the marchioness urged so earnestly the necessity of obtaining better assistance and advice than he could elsewhere receive, that M. d'Aubray decided upon returning home. He journeyed, reclining in his carriage, his head resting upon his daughter's bosom, for not one moment did a look or word betray the falsehood of her affectionate devotion; at last they reached Paris. Every thing had proceeded to her wish; the scene was changed; the physician, who had seen the first symptoms, would not witness the agonies of death, and in tracing the progress no one could now discover the cause of the illness; the thread of inquiry was snapped, and its lines were too far asunder to permit their being reunited. Notwithstanding every attention, M. d'Aubray gradually grew worse; the marchioness never quitted him. After an agony of four days, he expired in her arms, bestowing with his last breath a blessing upon his murderess. Her grief upon this was so violent, and unrestrained, that in comparison her brother's sorrow appeared indifference. But as no one suspected the crime, no examination of the body took place, and the tomb closed without the slightest supposition of guilt on her part.

But her object was not fully accomplished; she had acquired greater freedom of action, but her father's will did not realize her expectations; the greater part of his property reverted to her eldest brother, and to the second, who was a parliamentary counsellor; thus her own fortune was but slightly increased.

Sainte-Croix still pursued his gay and extravagant course of life with no apparent means; he had a steward named Martin, three footmen, George, Lapierre, and Lachaussée, and besides his carriage and equipages, other conveyances for his nightly excursions; and as he was young and handsome, no one was particularly concerned to inquire from whence his wealth proceeded. It was then customary enough for handsome men to be well provided for; it was said of Sainte-Croix that he had discovered the philosopher's stone. In society he had made acquaintance and was on terms of friendship with many of the nobility and men of fortune, amongst the latter with Reich de Penautier, a millionaire, the receiver-general of the clergy, and treasurer of the estates of Languedoc; one of those men with whom all things succeed; and who seem by the power of money, to give laws to creation. Penautier was connected in business with his head clerk, d'Alibert, who died suddenly of apoplexy. This event was known to him before the man's family were acquainted with it; all papers relative to their partnership disappeared, and the wife and daughter of the deceased were ruined. His brother-in-law, the Sieur de la Magdelaine, upon some vague rumours as to his death, commenced an inquiry, but died suddenly whilst it was proceeding. In one instance fortune seemed to abandon her favourite. Penautier was anxious to succeed the Sieur de Mennevillette in the office of receiver-general of the clergy, nearly about the value of sixty thousand livres, and knowing that he wished to resign in favour of Pierre Hannyvel, Sieur de Saint Laurent, he had endeavoured to purchase its possession, to the prejudice of the latter, but in vain; at the express desire of the clergy, Saint-Laurent received the appointment. Penautier had thereupon offered him forty thousand crowns for the half share of this appointment, but Saint-Laurent had declined the proposal. Their acquaintance, however, was continued, and Penautier was considered as one so predestined to success that none doubted he would finally obtain the office he desired.

In the mean time, the period of mourning being elapsed, Sainte-Croix and the marchioness openly resumed their intercourse; her brothers thereupon remonstrated, through the medium of a younger sister, then in a Carmelite convent; and the marchioness learnt that her father, on his deathbed, had intrusted to them the duty of her moral guidance. Thus her first crime was almost fruitless; she wished to free herself from the remonstrances of her father, and to share his fortune; yet her inheritance was so trifling, it had scarcely sufficed to pay her debts, and the former censures were renewed by her brothers, of whom the eldest, as president of the civil tribunal, could separate her again from her lover. This inconvenience was to be remedied. Lachaussée quitted the service of Sainte-Croix, and, through the influence of the marchioness, was engaged in the service of her brothers. But this time, to avoid suspicion, it was requisite to employ a poison less rapid in its action than that which had killed M. d'Aubray. They recommenced their experiments, not upon animals, lest that difference of organization might defeat their views, but, as before, in *animâ vili*. The marchioness was known as a pious and charitable woman, ever ready to relieve the distressed, and sharing with the Sisters of Mercy the attendance upon the sick, to whom she sent wine and medicine at the hospitals. Thus it caused no surprise to see her at the Hotel Dieu, distributing biscuits and preserved fruits to the convalescent; and her kindness, as before, was gratefully acknowledged. One month subsequent to this she revisited the hospital, to inquire after some patients in whose welfare she was much interested; she was told they had suffered a relapse, that fresh symptoms had supervened, that a deadly languor overcame them, beneath whose wasting influence they gradually declined. Of its cause she could learn nothing. The physicians told her was unknown, and defied their utmost skill. She inquired at the expiration of a fortnight; some of the patients were dead, others still lingered in hopeless agony, animated skeletons, whose only signs of life were the voice, sight, and breath.

Within two months all were dead; medical skill was equally foiled upon their examination after death, as it had been in their treatment. Such success was encouraging. Lachaussée received orders to accomplish his mission. One morning he was desired by his master to bring a glass of water and some wine, for himself and his secretary, Consté. He did so; but hardly had d'Aubray touched it with his lips than he pushed it away, saying, "What is it you have brought? I think you wish to poison me:" then placing the glass before Consté, he bade him examine it and see what it contained. The secretary poured a few drops of the liquid into a teaspoon; it had the taste and smell of vitriol.

Lachaussée now came forward, and said he knew what it was; that the servant of the counsellor having that morning taken medicine, he had accidentally brought the glass he had used: and upon this, taking the glass from the secretary's hand, he pretended to take it, and added he was right in his supposition, it was the same by its smell—and thereupon threw what remained of it into the fireplace. As neither of them had taken sufficient of the liquid to be inconvenienced, the circumstance was soon forgotten; but to the marchioness and Sainte-Croix it was a failure, and, at the risk of including many in their act of revenge, they resolved to employ other means. Three months elapsed without the occurrence of any favourable opportunity; but about the beginning of April, 1670, d'Aubray and his brother went to spend the Easter holidays at Villequay, in Beauce. Lachaussée accompanied them, and received fresh instructions on their departure. The day after their arrival a pigeon pie was placed on the table at dinner: seven who partook of it were soon after taken ill; three, who had not, were unaffected. Those upon whom the poison had chiefly acted were M. d'Aubray, his brother, and the captain of the guard. Whatever might be the cause, the two former were the most quickly indisposed with violent vomitings; the latter, with others, although suffering greatly from pain in the stomach, did not at first exhibit symptoms so dangerous; and here, as before, all medical aid was powerless. The 12th of April, five days subsequent to this, the president of the civil court and his brother, the counsellor, returned to Paris, both so changed that they seemed the victims of a long and painful illness.

The marchioness was then residing in the country, where she remained during the illness of her brothers. At the very first consultation all hope of saving the president was abandoned by his physicians. His case was similar to that of his father, and was considered to be an unknown and incurable disease. He became daily worse, refused all kinds of food, and was subject to incessant vomitings. For the three last days of is life, he complained as if a fire were constantly burning in his chest, the flames of which seemed to be almost indicated by the aspect of his eyes, as these continued animated when death was master over the rest. At last, June 17, 1670, he expired. Suspicions were now excited; his body was opened, and a *procès verbal* was drawn up. This was done in the presence of MM. Dupré and Durant, surgeons; Yavart, apothecary; and M. Bachot, the medical attendant of the brothers. They admitted the state of the stomach and of the duodenum might result from poison;

but as certain humours would at times induce the same phenomena, they would not affirm the death of the patient occurred from other than natural causes; he was therefore interred without further inquiry. It was M. Bachot who had particularly recommended, as medical attendant upon the counsellor, this autopsy of his brother. He seemed stricken by the same malady, and he sought to discover, from the traces of death, some means yet to defend life. The symptoms were similar, and, moreover, the counsellor was subject to violent paroxysms of mind and body, which allowed him no repose; his bed was torture, yet no sooner had he quitted than he sought it again, if but merely as a variation of suffering. At the end of three months he died. The stomach, duodenum, and liver, were similarly disorganized, and presented the same indications of poison as his brother's, and moreover were externally burnt, which was, said the physicians, an unequivocal sign of poison; although it sometimes happens, added they, that a cacochymy is followed by the same effects; but no certain evidence could be obtained. As for Lachaussée, so free was he from suspicion, that he received a legacy of one hundred crowns from the counsellor, and a present of one thousand, also, from the marchioness and Sainte-Croix, in acknowledgment of his attentions.

Nevertheless, events of this kind, so frequent and fatal in one family, not only afflicted the heart but were fearful to the mind. For death is not malicious, it is rather deaf and blind—it strikes at random; and society was astonished to view this apparent rancour against all who bore one name. Yet no suspicion was excited. The marchioness went into mourning; Sainte-Croix continued his course of extravagance, and all things proceeded as usual. He had also, in the mean time, become acquainted with Saint-Laurent, whose office Penautier had failed to obtain—who, although he had inherited the immense wealth of his father-in-law, the Sieur Lesecq, who had suddenly died, nevertheless still hankered after the place of receiver-general of the clergy of Languedoc. Fortune favoured him in this respect at last. A few days after he had taken into his service, at the recommendation of Sainte-Croix, a domestic named George, Saint-Laurent was taken ill; the symptoms in every respect as serious as those of M. d'Aubray and his sons, but only more rapid, terminating fatally in twenty-four hours. Upon the day of his death an officer of the supreme court arrived, and, on the recital of his friend's illness, said to the notary, Sainfray, in the presence of the servants, that it would be requisite to open the body. One hour after, George disappeared, without a word to any one, and without requiring his wages. Suspicions increased; but, as before, the examination of the body was productive of no definite result; the general appearance was the same as in the cases of the Messrs. d'Aubray, only that the intestines were marked with numerous red spots.

In June, 1669, Penautier succeeded Saint-Laurent. His widow's suspicions amounted almost to certainty upon the flight of his servant, which the following circumstance still more confirmed. An abbé, a particular friend of the deceased, aware of the sudden disappearance of George, met him some days after in the street des Maçons, near the Sorbonne. They were both on the same side, and a hay cart which was passing at the time stopped up the way. George raised his head, immediately recognised the abbé, crouched beneath the waggon, and, at the risk of being crushed as it proceeded, passed beneath it, and thus escaped from the mere sight of a man whose presence recalled at once his crime, and made him tremble for its retribution.

At the instance of Madame de Saint-Laurent, an active inquiry was commenced, but in vain; notwithstanding every exertion he escaped. In the mean time, rumours of these strange, sudden, and unexplained deaths, were widely circulated in Paris; in the gay saloons of which, their frequent discussion became a source of inquietude to Sainte-Croix. No suspicion at present rested upon him, but precaution was requisite; he thought, therefore, to obtain a situation which should place him beyond its reach. A vacancy was about to occur in the king's household, of which the purchase-money was one hundred thousand crowns; and although without any apparent resources, it was nevertheless stated he was about to give this sum. He addressed himself to Belleguise to arrange this with Panautier, who was unwilling to enter into terms; he had no further occasion for the services of Sainte-Croix, he had inherited all he could expect, and endeavoured therefore to induce him to renounce his project. Sainte-Croix, upon this, wrote to Belleguise, urging his re-consideration, dwelling upon the advantages that would accrue to all, and appointing an interview at the same time, with a promise of further explanations. He then lived in the street des Bernardins, but the place of meeting he named was the room he had hired of the Widow Brunet, in the by-street of the "place Maubert." It was here and at the house of the apothecary Glazer, that his experiments were conducted; but by a just retribution these manipulations were fatal to those who prepared them. The apothecary died; Martin, after enduring violent pain, was at his last gasp; Sainte-Croix himself was so ill, although ignorant of the cause, that, unable to quit his house, he had the furnace of Glazer brought to him, that he might continue his experiments. He was then, in fact, engaged in researches into the nature of a poison so subtle, that its mere emanation was fatal. He had heard of the poisoned napkin the dauphin, eldest brother of Charles VII., had used, whilst playing at tennis, and traditions, almost recent, had related to him the history of the gloves of Jeanne d'Albret; these were secrets, which, though now lost, Sainte-Croix hoped to recover. It was amid these occupations, that one of those accidents occurred, which seem to be less the result of chance than the will of Heaven. At the moment when bending over his furnace, he watched the deadly preparation approach its greatest intensity; the glass mask he wore as a protection against its fumes, detached itself, and Sainte-Croix fell as if struck down by a thunderbolt.* His wife, surprised that he did not quit his laboratory at the usual hour, knocked at the door; and receiving no answer, aware also of his secret and dangerous pursuits, alarmed her domestics, who broke open the door, and found Sainte-Croix extended near his furnace, and around him the fragments of the glass mask. It was impossible to conceal the circumstance of his death; the servants had seen the body, and could reveal the facts. The commissioner Ricard was therefore required to put
e der seal, and Sainte-Croix's widow contented herself with
furnace, and the remains of the mask.

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ccounts of his death. MM. Vauthier and Geranger, authors
t Penautier, state he died after an illness of five months, retaining
ving the consolations of religion. The author of the Memoir of
Brinvilliers relates it on the contrary as stated above; and we
t probable, the most generally received, and the most popular.

The news spread rapidly about. Sainte-Croix had been a public character; and the rumour he was about to purchase a place at court, had tended still more to make him known. Lachaussée was among the first who heard of his death. Knowing that his rooms were in possession of the authorities, he endeavoured to obtain possession of some money and papers, which he declared to be his property, and reclaimed therefore by a requisition to that effect. He received for answer, that he must await the removal of the seals; and if facts justified his statements, whatever belonged to him should be given up. Nor was Lachaussée the only one who was seriously alarmed by the death of Sainte-Croix. The marchioness, to whom all the secrets of the fatal cabinet were familiar, had no sooner heard of the event, than she proceeded to the commissioner; and although it was late at night, she requested an immediate interview. But his head clerk assuring her it was impossible, as his master had retired to rest, the marchioness persisted, requesting that he might be awakened, and that he would give up to her a casket, which she wished to receive unopened. But finding her entreaties were useless, she retired, saying, she would send in the morning to receive it. Early, therefore, the next day, a man visited the commissioner, offering from her the sum of fifty louis, if he would deliver up the casket; but he replied, it was impossible until the usual formalities had taken place, and that then, whatever was really her property, should at once be faithfully restored. This answer decided her course; no time was to be lost; she set out immediately from her house in the street Neuve Saint-Paul, to her country house at Picpus; and thence to Liège, where she took refuge in a convent.

Sainte-Croix's rooms had been sequestered on July 31, 1672, and upon the 8th August they commenced their examination. Upon this Alexandre Delamarre, an attorney, on behalf of the marchioness, put in a paper, declaring that if in the casket her signature was found affixed to a promissory note of thirty thousand livres, it was her intention to declare it void, as obtained in an illegal manner. After this formality, the door was opened in the presence of the Commissioner Picard, the officer appointed, and the widow of Sainte-Croix. They began by first arranging the loose papers, and whilst so occupied, a small roll fell from amid them, on which was written, "My Confession;" but as all those present had no reason to believe Sainte-Croix to have been a dishonest man, they decided it should be destroyed unread. This done, they proceeded to draw up an inventory of the property. One of the first objects which arrested their attention was the casket claimed by the marchioness. Her eagerness to obtain it had excited curiosity; they resolved to commence with its examination, and every one pressed around to know what it contained. This, however, it is best to relate by the mere reproduction of the Procès-Verbal; no language, in such a case, is so powerfully descriptive as the official document.

"In the cabinet of Sainte-Croix we found a small casket, about a foot square, upon opening which there was a half sheet of paper, endorsed, 'My Will;' written on one side as follows: 'I earnestly solicit those into whose hands this casket may fall, to deliver it themselves into the hands of the Marchioness de Brinvilliers, dwelling rue Neuve Saint-Paul; inasmuch as whatever it contains belongs to her alone, and that there is nothing within it of any utility to another; and in case her death should have preceded mine, that it may be then burnt, with its untouched. And to the end that no plea of ignorance may be advanced, I swear by the God whom I adore, and by all that is sacred, that nothing but the truth is here averred. If peradventure these my intentions, in every respect so just and reasonable, are opposed, I charge their consciences both in this and the world to come, with the acquittal of any responsibility dependent upon mine, declaring this to be my last will. Done at Paris, this 26th May, 1672." Signed "Sainte-Croix;" and underneath these words—"There is a packet, directed to M. Penautier, which should be delivered up." Such an opening increased the interest of the scene; there was a general murmur of curiosity; but on silence being restored, they continued the inventory.

"A packet was found enclosed of eight seals of different arms, endorsed, 'To be destroyed in case of my death, being of no use to any one. I humbly supplicate those into whose hands these may fall, to burn them, and all unopened. I lay it as a duty on their consciences.' In this packet were found two more, containing sublimate of mercury. Item; a packet with six seals, and a similar inscription, in which was another sublimate, weighing about half a pound. Item; another with three packets, one containing half an ounce of sublimate; the other, two ounces, and a quarter of a pound of Roman vitriol; and the third, vitriol, calcined and prepared. In the casket there was also a square phial, containing about half a pint of clear water, the nature of which M. Moreou, the physician, declared he could not describe, until it had been subjected to chemical analysis. Item; another phial, at the bottom of which there was a white sediment. A delph pot, in which there were three drachms of prepared opium. Item; a folded paper, in which there were two or three drachms of corrosive sublimate in powder. Then a small box, in which was a kind of stone called the 'infernal stone;' a paper, containing an ounce of opium; then three ounces of regulus of antimony, some flower of quince, and a dried preparation of the same. Item; a packet, endorsed, 'to be burnt in case of my death,' containing thirty-four letters, said to be in the handwriting of the Marchioness de Brinvilliers. Item; a packet sealed with six seals, with the same inscription as above, in which were found twenty-seven pieces of paper, each endorsed, 'Many curious secrets.' Lastly, a packet containing seventy-five livres, variously addressed." Besides which they found in the casket two bonds, one from the Marchioness de Brinvilliers, the other from Penautier; the first for thirty thousand francs, the second for ten thousand francs; the one corresponding with the death of d'Aubray the father, the other with that of Saint-Laurent. This difference showed that, according to the tariff of Sainte-Croix, parricide was dearer than a common assassination. Thus, at the moment of his death also, he had bequeathed his poisons to his mistress and his friend. He had not revelled sufficiently in crimes, but desired to be an accomplice in murder, even after death. The first care of the officers was to analyse the contents of the packets, and to test them upon different animals, and the following is the report of Guy Simon:

scribing its careful preparation, subtle qualities, and fatal
adds, "in water the weight of the poison commonly throws
e former rises and the poison is precipitated. Fire consumes
what there is of harmless and pure, and leaves only an acrid,
er, which resists its influence. The effect that the poison
animals is still more sensible, its malignity is uniform where-

soever it spreads, vitiating all it touches, and consuming the intestines by a violent and strange inflammation. But in animals its appearance is so carefully concealed that it cannot be detected; every part is apparently endowed with life; whilst death circulates in the veins, and leaves no trace behind of its existence. Every kind of test has been applied; the first by pouring some drops of the liquid found in one of the phials, in oil of tartar and sea water; and nothing was precipitated at the bottom of the vessels into which it was poured. The second, by pouring the same liquid into a sanded vessel, and no matter dry or acrid to the tongue, scarcely any fixed salt was found; the third was upon a Turkey hen, a pigeon, dog, and other animals, and upon dissection a small quantity of coagulated blood upon the ventricle of the heart was all that could be traced of its action. Two other experiments made upon a cat and a pigeon by a white powder, gave similar results; death was in both cases gradual, but left scarcely any trace of its cause."

These results, whilst proving the extent of Sainte-Croix's chemical knowledge, excited the suspicion he had not gratuitously employed his art; the late deaths so sudden and unexpected, occurred to the minds of all; the bonds of the marchioness and Penautier seemed the covenants of blood; and as one was absent, and the other too rich and powerful to be arrested without proof, the opposition raised by Lachaussée was remembered. He had stated in the document he put in upon affixing the seals to the effects of the deceased, that for seven years he had been in his service, including thus the period of his attendance upon the brothers d'Aubray. The bag containing the thousand pistoles, and three bonds of one hundred livres, had been found in the spot he had named, it was thereby evident he was well acquainted with the cabinet; were this so, he knew then the existence of the casket; if he knew of that, he could not be innocent. The widow therefore of the eldest son of M. d'Aubray preferred an accusation against him, upon which he was arrested, and poison found upon him. The cause was brought before the Chatelet; Lachaussée firmly denied the charge; and the judges, not thinking there was yet a sufficiency of proof, condemned him to undergo the "question preparatoire;"* and by virtue of an appeal of Madame Mangot de Villarceaux, a decree was pronounced, dated 4th March, 1673, which declared Jean Amelin, called Lachaussée, attainted and convicted of having poisoned the late president and the counsellor of the Civil Court, to be condemned to be broken alive, and to expire upon the wheel, but previously to be subjected to the question ordinary and extraordinary, to obtain a full revelation of his accomplices. By the same decree, the Marchioness de Brinvilliers was condemned, by default, to have her head cut off.

Lachaussée underwent the torture of the "boots," which consisted in placing each limb of the condemned between two wooden boards, and then compressing these together by a ring of iron, after which wedges were driven down the centre of the wooden frames: the ordinary torture was four, the extraordinary, eight wedges. At the third wedge, Lachaussée declared he was ready to confess; the torture was thereupon remitted. He was then placed upon a mattress, and being unable to speak, he requested half-an-hour to recover his strength. The following is an extract from the Procès Verbal:

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* There were two kinds of torture; the "question preparatoire," and the "question préalable." The preparatory question, or examination by torture, was employed when the judges, not being convinced, desired to obtain direct proof from the avowals of the culprit, prior to passing judgment. The question "préalable," on the contrary, was applied after judgment had been given, with a view to discover his accomplices. In the former case, a prisoner, in the hope of saving his life, would frequently endure the most frightful tortures; but in the latter, knowing he was condemned, he rarely added these to a death already sufficiently terrible.

"Upon his recovery, Lachaussée admitted his guilt,—that Sainte-Croix had told him, that the marchioness had given to him the poison with which to kill her brothers; that he had poisoned them in water and broths; had mixed a reddish water in the wine of the eldest son of D'Aubray, and clear water in the pigeon-pie at Villequoy; that for this Sainte-Croix had promised him a hundred pistoles, and to retain him always in his service; that he gave him an account of the effect of these poisons, and had received them very frequently from him. Sainte-Croix moreover told him, that the marchioness was not informed of his other poisonings, but he thought she was aware of them, because she frequently spoke to him upon the matter; that she wished to induce him to abscond, offered money for that purpose, and had required of him the casket, with whatever it contained; and, finally, had Sainte-Croix been able to have introduced any one into the service of the widow of the president of the civil court, he would also have poisoned her,—also, that Sainte-Croix had designs upon her sister-in-law."

This confession, removing all further doubt, occasioned a decree, dated 24th of March, 1673, by virtue of which, Belleguise, Martin, Poitevin, Olivier Véron, and the wife of a man named Quésdon, were cited to appear before the court; as well, also, as the arrest of Lapierre, and a subpœna to be served against Penautier.

In consequence on the 21st, 22nd, and 24th, Penautier, Martin, and Belleguise, were examined. On the 26th, the first was released, Belleguise was remanded, and the arrest of Martin ordered. On the 24th of March, Lachaussée was broken upon the wheel. Exili, the principal of all this evil, disappeared like Mephistophiles after the destruction of Faust, and no one heard more of him. At the end of the year, Martin was released, owing to deficiency of proof.

CHAPTER II.

During these proceedings, the marchioness had remained at Liege, and although retired into a convent, had by no means renounced certain earthly indulgences; she was reconciled to the death of Sainte-Croix, though she had loved him so much as to threaten suicide on his account; and had moreover appointed as his successor a person named Theria, of whom, beyond his name, no information can be obtained. But as every successive witness had more or less implicated her, it was resolved to pursue her into the retreat where she believed she was in safety. But this was a commission of great difficulty, and requiring much discretion. Desgrais, one of the most active officers of the maréchaussée, offered to undertake it. He was a handsome youth of about thirty-six or thirty-eight years of age, whose appear-

no degree betrayed the officer of police; assuming all characters
ease, associating with every grade of society, under his disguise,
est beggar to the greatest lord. His offer was accepted. He
fore, for Liège, escorted by a body of archers, and furnished
om the king, addressed to the municipal Council of
ouis XIV. reclaimed the marchioness. The council,
is, ordered her to be delivered up to Desgrais. This
ficient for his purpose; he dared not arrest the
ent for two reasons—firstly, because, if made aware of
might conceal herself in some of those cloistered re-
y to her superiors; and secondly, because an event of
ligious a city as Liège would be considered a profanation,
me popular excitement, by the aid of which she might be
pe.

w considered what disguise he should assume, and thinking that
abbé the least likely to awaken suspicion, he presented himself
e convent gates as a compatriot returning from Rome, who was
willing to pass through Liège, without paying his respects to a lady so
eminent by her beauty and her misfortunes, as the marchioness. Desgrais had all the manners of the scion of a noble house; and, flattering as a courtier, venturous as a soldier, charming alike by his vivacity and his self-confidence, his first visit soon obtained him the promised pleasure of another. This was not long delayed; he returned early the next day, (such attention could not but be pleasing to the marchioness,) and was more cordially received than before. Intellectual, and accustomed to good society, of which lately she had been deprived; she found in Desgrais the refined manners of her Parisian circles. Unfortunately, the charming abbé was obliged to leave Liège within a few days: he was consequently more urgent for another interview, and this was arranged for the next day, with all the usual forms of a rendezvous. He was punctual, and had been impatiently expected, but by a conjunction of circumstances, which Desgrais had doubtless pre-arranged, their agreeable conference was continually interrupted, and this precisely at the moment, when witnesses were most inconvenient; he complained of this as a danger that might compromise them both, and he besought the marchioness to grant him a meeting beyond the city, in a spot where they should be neither recognised, nor followed. His request was denied only so long as it was sufficient to enhance the value of the favour, and was finally accorded for the same evening; the marchioness met Desgrais at the appointed place, then on taking her by the hand, he made a signal,—the archers advanced, the lover removed his mask, and the inamorata was a prisoner. Desgrais upon this returned immediately to the convent, produced his order from the Council of Sixty, by which he obtained access to her room, and beneath her bed he found a casket, which he immediately sealed up and brought away. The marchioness upon seeing this casket in his hands, at first appeared completely overcome, but recovering herself she claimed from him a paper it contained, entitled her confession; Desgrais refused it, and as he turned to give orders to set forward on the journey to Paris, she tried to choke herself by swallowing a pin, but this being observed was prevented by Claude Rolla, one of the archers. They halted in the evening for supper, at which another archer, named Barbier, attended, and carefully removed the knives, forks, and every thing with which self-des

be attempted; whereupon, the marchioness bit a piece from the glass out of which she was drinking, but this she was prevented from swallowing; she then said, that if Barbier would save her, she would amply reward him, and proposed for that purpose, the assassination of Desgrais; but this he declined, adding for any other purpose he was at her disposal; thereupon she asked for pen and paper and wrote the following letter:

"My dear Theria,—I am in the custody of Desgrais, who is forcibly conveying me from Liège to Paris. Come and release me."

Barbier took the letter and promised to deliver it as addressed, but instead of this, placed it in the hands of Desgrais. On the morrow she sent another, acquainting him, that as the escort consisted only of eight persons, four or five determined men might readily defeat them, and that she reckoned upon his making the attempt. At last, anxious from not receiving any answer, nor observing any indication of an endeavour to fulfil her requests, she despatched a third; in this, she besought him if he were not able to attack the escort and free her, at least to slay two of the four horses which belonged to it, and to profit by the confusion this would cause, to gain possession of the casket, and destroy it, as without this she was inevitably lost. Although Theria had never received these letters, he nevertheless proceeded to Maestricht, through which the prisoner was to pass, and attempted to bribe the archers, offering no less than ten thousand livres, but they refused it. At Rocroy, the escort was met by M. le Conseiller Palluau, whom the parliament had empowered to meet the prisoner on her way, and to submit her to an unexpected examination, so that being thus taken by surprise, she should not have time for preparation. Desgrais first made him acquainted with every previous fact, and then placed in his hands the casket, which had been a point of such extreme solicitude to her; M. de Palluau opened it, and found, amongst others, a paper entitled, "My Confession."*

This confession was a strange proof of the necessity which constrains the guilty to confide their crimes either to the heart of man or the mercy of God. Sainte-Croix had, as has been stated, drawn up a confession which was burned; and the Marchioness now commits a similar imprudence. This was comprised in seven articles, and commenced thus—"I confess myself to God, and to you, my Father"—being a complete narration of all her crimes. In the first article she confessed to have been an incendiary; in the second, to have commenced her unchaste life at seven years of age; in the third, to have poisoned her father; in the fourth, her brothers; in the fifth, an attempt to poison her sister; and, in the two last, was a recital of strange and unheard of debaucheries. There was in this woman a union of Locusta and Messalina. Antiquity could offer nothing more flagitious. Strengthened by a perfect acquaintance with this important document, M. de Palluau commenced his examination. The inquiries were of necessity very numerous, and were severally as to the cause of her flight to Liège, whether she knew of the papers found in the casket, as to the first article of her confession, and the others generally, the cause of the death of her father and her brothers, and if the latter were not through the instrumentality of Lachaussée, to all of which she pleaded a complete ignorance of the facts charged. She admitted to have quitted France at the recommendation of her relations upon the death of her brothers, and to have met Sainte-Croix after his liberation from the bastile, but denied all recollection of his inducing her to attempt her father's life, or of his having given her drugs for that purpose, or having said, "he knew the means to make her rich;" and being questioned as to the reason why she had given a bond of thirty thousand livres to Sainte-Croix, she replied, it was a sum deposited with him on account of her creditors, for which she held his receipt, though during her journey it was lost, and that her husband was ignorant of this act,—moreover she could not recollect whether this was given before or after the death of her brothers. Interrogated as to her acquaintance with an apothecary named Glazer, she replied she had consulted him three times. She pretended ignorance to the last of her letters to Theria and the danger to her by Desgrais's retention of the casket; she denied, moreover, having perceived any symptoms of her father's illness, either on his visit or return from Offemont in 1666; and explained her transactions with Penautier to have been mere matters of money lent and borrowed. Thus confining herself to a complete system of forgetfulness or denegation of the facts alleged, she arrived at Paris, and was committed to the Conciergerie, where soon other charges were added to the terrible indictment now preparing against her. These were contained chiefly in the depositions of Serjeant Clüet, which proved the anxiety of the marchioness to send Lachaussée into Picardy, and to obtain possession of the casket opened by Picard; and to have boasted of her power to remove people who incurred her displeasure.

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* I have made every possible research to obtain this document, the object of general conversation at the period it refers to; but it was never printed, either in the *Gazette de France*, the *Journal du Palais*, *Plaidoyer de Nivelle*, or in the various pleas which were drawn up for, or against the marchioness. I have availed myself of the assistance of my friends Paulin Paris, Pillon, and Richard, who have been unable to obtain any information upon the subject, and also of the aid of the eminent bibliophilist, M. Charles Nodier, and of Mons. de Montmergué; but their researches have been hitherto fruitless. It is now hopeless to think of its discovery, and I must content myself with quoting the opinion of Madame de Sévigné, in her 269th and 270th letters. "Madame de Brinvilliers acquaints us in her confession, that her career of vicious indulgence began at seven years of age; that she had since continued this course, and had poisoned her father, brothers, and one of her children, and taken poison herself to test an antidote. Medea never equalled this. She acknowledged it to be her handwriting, but said that it was written during an attack of fever, and was a frenzied, incoherent production, not worth perusal. There is now no other topic of conversation, but the acts and deeds of Brinvilliers. As she has written in her confession, that she has killed her father, it was doubtless done from the fear of forgetting to accuse herself of the act; her alarm lest these sins may escape her recollection is excellent."

Rusico, who published at Amsterdam in 1792 a new edition of the *Causes Célèbres de Gayot de Pitaval*, and who might have consulted the parliamentary papers then extant, adds:

"Madame de Sévigné does not mention that the marchioness had made an attempt to poison her sister, a fact which was recorded in her confession."

Edme Huet deposed to the intimacy between Sainte-Croix and the marchioness; to have seen some poison at the house of the latter, and recognised it as such, her father being an apothecary; that the marchioness, rather animated after a party, had one day said to her, showing her a little box, "See! this is the way to avenge yourself of your enemies, and, small as this box is, it is full of inheritances;" and that then, startled by her speech, had enjoined her silence upon it; that Lachaussée owing her money, she had threatened Sainte-Croix to reveal what she knew, whereupon he paid her demand; and that both he and the marchioness had always poison about them in case of arrest.

There were other depositions from Laurent Perrette, a servant of the apothecary Glazer, and from Marie de Villeray, in the service of the marchioness; their evidence was chiefly hearsay or suspective, but tended towards the crimination of the marchioness; and, finally, Desgrais and the attendants deposed to the facts already related upon her journey from Liège; to which was added the statement of Françoise Roussel, who related the illness she had endured consequent upon the poison given to her by her mistress, when testing its strength before she administered it to her father.

It was difficult against so much corroborative evidence to continue her system of absolute denial; but, nevertheless, the marchioness persisted in asserting her innocence, and committed her defence to M. Nivelle, one of the most celebrated advocates of the day. He combated each successive count of the indictment with wonderful ability, admitted the adulterous intercourse of his client with Sainte-Croix, but denied her participation in the death of her relations, which he imputed entirely to the revenge of Sainte-Croix, owing to their opposition to his acquaintance with the marchioness. As to her confession, he attacked its validity by citations of similar cases, where the evidence of an individual against himself had been invariably disallowed upon the axiom of "*Non auditur perire volens*"—of which he quoted three instances. A Spaniard, born at Barcelona, being condemned to die for an act of homicide, refused to confess himself at the place of execution, and this, notwithstanding every entreaty. St. Thomas de Villeneuve, archbishop of Valencia, hearing this, and wishing to save the soul of the culprit, endeavoured to induce a better frame of mind; but his surprise was great when the criminal informed him, he had every reason to curse the confessors, inasmuch as he was condemned to death owing to the revelation of his crime to a priest, who, being the brother of his victim, had betrayed him, from a desire of revenge, into the hands of justice. The archbishop, considering the life of the man to be of less consequence than the honour of religion, made inquiry as to the truth of the statement, and, upon its confirmation by the priest, subjected him immediately to a severe punishment, and obtained the pardon of the criminal; thus securing the inviolability and sacredness of confession. As a second example, he cited the case of an innkeeper, who murdered a guest and concealed his body in his cellar. Overcome by remorse, he avowed his crime to his confessor, and showed even the place where he had interred his victim. The relations of the deceased, after every possible inquiry, offered a large reward for information as to his fate. Whereupon the confessor, tempted by the promised sum, secretly revealed the facts the innkeeper had confided to him. He was consequently arrested and tortured—avowed his crime—but charged the confessor with its betrayal; upon this the court, indignant at the means made use of to obtain possession of the facts, declared him innocent, and remitted his punishment,—but condemned the confessor to be hung, and his body to be thrown into the fire, so sacred to them was the rite of confession. The third instance was that of an Armenian and his wife, against the latter of whom a wealthy Turk had conceived designs prejudicial to her honour, threatening to slay her husband and herself if she refused consent to his wishes. She feigned compliance. Whereupon her husband, being aware of the fact, contrived to slay and bury him with her assistance. But shortly after confessing their crime to a priest of their nation, he, taking advantage of the circumstance, forced from them various sums of money under threats of its revelation, until they were ruined by his exactions. Unable to comply any more with his extortions, he denounced them to the father of their victim, but which was not attended with the results expected; for the Vizier felt as much pity for the poor Armenians as indignation against the priest who had robbed and betrayed them. He sent, therefore, for the bishop of the Armenian church, and demanded from him the punishment due to a priest who revealed the secrets of the confessional; to which the bishop replied, that the judgment in such case was death by fire, as to confess was a duty enjoined upon the guilty by the Christian religion, under pain of eternal punishment. The Vizier, satisfied with this, sent for the accused and bade them relate the facts, which the wife did, urging the necessity of the case in her respect, and detailing the insatiable avarice of the priest. After this, the priest was confronted with them, and, upon the sentence of the bishop, the Vizier ordered him to be burned alive, which was carried into immediate execution.

Notwithstanding the effect produced by these citations, whether the judges did not allow them to be valid, or held the other evidence sufficient, it was apparent to all, from the turn the trial took, that the marchioness was condemned. In fact, before even the judgment was pronounced, on the 16th July, 1676, she saw M. Pirot, doctor of the Sorbonne, enter her prison, at the request of the first president of the court. This worthy magistrate foreseeing the result of the trial, and thinking that spiritual assistance should not be withheld until the last hour, had obtained an interview with this excellent priest, who, although he observed to him there were already two members attached to the Conciergerie, and that he was hardly adequate to the task, unable as he was to endure the sight of blood ; yet as the president renewed his entreaties, stating he was most anxious to obtain the assistance of one in whom he could place the fullest reliance, he consented to undertake the painful task ;* for the president assured him that, accustomed as he was to the recklessness of crime, Madame de Brinvilliers was endowed with a self-possession which had something fearful in its character. On the morning of his interview with M. Pirot, he had conducted the examination of the prisoner for thirteen hours, during which the accused had been confronted with Briancourt, one of the witnesses by whose evidence she was chiefly implicated. On the following day another examination of five hours had taken place, both of which she had maintained with the utmost respect towards the judges, and the proudest contempt towards the witness ; reproaching him as a miserable drunken valet, who, having been discharged for misconduct, was willing to bear false witness against her.†

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* The following narrative of the last hours of the Marchioness de Brinvilliers is drawn up from a MS. left by M. Pirot, and which is mentioned by Gayot de Pitaval, *Causes Célèbres*, tome 1, page 309, Amsterdam, 1764, but which has hitherto remained unpublished. It was placed in the hands of Mons. Dumas by his learned friend Paulin Paris.

† The first President had no hope consequently of being enabled to influence her mind but through the medium of religion ; for it was not sufficient to decapitate her in the Place de la Grêve ; her poisons must perish with her, or society would obtain no advantage from her death.

Pirot was introduced also by a letter from her sister, belonging to the convent of St. James, exhorting the marchioness in the most affectionate terms to place in him the fullest confidence, and to consider him not only as a spiritual guide but as a sincere friend. She had just returned from the court when M. Pirot entered, where she had for three hours persisted in her course of denial, although the president, in reminding her of the awful situation in which she stood, appearing for the last time before men, so soon to be ushered into the presence of her God, had done this in a manner so affecting, that the oldest judges, and those most accustomed to such scenes, had shed tears. As soon, therefore, as the marchioness perceived him, not doubting but that he came as the messenger of death, she advanced towards him, saying,

"You come then, sir, to announce——"

But upon this she was interrupted by Father Chavigny, who accompanied M. Pirot.

"Madame," said he, "let us first commence by prayer."

They knelt together, Madame de Brinvilliers requesting the attendants to add for her sake a prayer to the Virgin: then at the conclusion of their supplications, she recommenced.

"Assuredly sir," said she, "you come at the request of the President to console me, and it is with you that I must pass the little which remains to me of life."

"Madam," replied the doctor, "I come to administer to you all the spiritual consolation in my power. I can only wish it were not upon an occasion of this kind."

"Sir," the marchioness replied, "we must resign ourselves to our misfortunes;" then turning towards Father Chavigny, "Father," she continued, "I am obliged to you for this introduction of M. Pirot, and for your promised visits to this place. Pray to God, I beseech you, for me. For the future I shall only address myself to your friend, as I must confer with him on matters which admit no other hearer. Farewell, and may God reward you for the kindness you would so willingly have exercised towards me."

Upon this Chavigny departed, leaving the marchioness with M. Pirot and the prison attendants. This was in a large room in the tower of Montgommery. At its extremity there was a bed for the woman in attendance, and another for the guard. It was the same in which the poet Théophile had been confined, and near the door some of his verses were then seen written by his own hand. The guard perceiving the cause of the doctor's visit, immediately withdrew towards the lower part of the room. Believing then her sentence had been already pronounced. the marchioness commenced the conversation with reference to it, but M. Pirot acquainted her that at present this was not the case; adding, he did not know precisely when it would be, nor what might be the result.

"I have no anxiety about the future," she replied; "if my sentence be not yet pronounced it will be so to-morrow. I expect it to be death; and the only hope I indulge is that of delay between judgment and its execution; for were I led forth to die to-day, I should have but little time to prepare, and I feel, sir, how much need I have of more. Yes," continued she, after a pause, "the more I reflect the more I am convinced, a day is far too short a respite to enable me to appear before the tribunal of my Maker, to abide his judgment, having suffered that of man."

Upon this the doctor assured her, that should even sentence of death be pronounced that day, it would not be executed until the morrow. "Yet," added he, "though death be yet uncertain, I highly approve of your resolution to prepare for it as though pronounced."

Thus the conversation was for some time continued, the marchioness intimating her intention to confess the events of her past life, but desirous first to ascertain the opinion of M. Pirot as to her innocence or guilt, and what course he would now recommend her to adopt. To which he replied, he was well aware of the fearful crimes with which she was charged, and that it was impossible to hope for pardon from God unless she revealed, not only the nature of the poison, but its antidote, and the names of her accomplices; it was due to society this reparation should be made, for without this, as the system might be continued, she would be accountable for the crimes thus committed after her death; and to crime in death, added he, there is no remission of punishment; to obtain this our crimes must perish first. To these opinions the marchioness acceded, but anxiously asked whether there were not sins of so deep a dye, so fearful in number, that the church dared not remit them; and if the justice of heaven could enumerate, was it possible for its mercy to forgive them. Pirot upon this replied, whilst his heart recoiled from her with fear; that he supposed this question was put in merely a general point of view, and without particular reference to the state of her conscience; but assured her there were no sins to which mercy could not be extended; that this was an article of faith, and that she could not be a true Catholic if she doubted its truth; adding, that despair and impenitence alone were irremissible sins. The marchioness prayed earnestly for grace to receive this truth, professing her sincere belief, but adding, she was fearful the Almighty would withhold pardon from one so unworthy and undeserving of the blessings she had enjoyed. The doctor reassured her, and it was whilst thus conversing, that he formed the following estimation of her character:

She was a woman naturally brave, and endowed originally with a meek and virtuous imagination, yet seemingly indifferent to the impressions it received; her mind was active and acute; her ideas clear and decisive, and expressed with precision and brevity; ready with expedients in cases of difficulty, and at once resolving upon the course to be pursued; yet withal, trifling and inconstant, impatient of repetition, which induced M. Pirot not unfrequently to change the subject of discourse or reintroduce it in a more varied form. She spoke seldom, yet well; without study and without affectation; always self-possessed, and never misled into inconsiderate expressions. It would have been impossible, either by her conversation or appearance, to have imagined one so fearfully criminal as confession proved her to be; it is the more a matter of surprise and wherein we must submissively adore the judgment of God, when man is abandoned to his own will, that one blessed with a soul of a naturally elevated nature, a presence of mind amid the most unforeseen events, firmness nothing could shake, and a resolution to await and endure death if need be, could have thus retrograded and become capable of so great a crime as parricide. She was of a slight figure; her hair was of chestnut colour and very thick; the head well formed, eyes blue of a mild expression, and very beautiful; skin extremely fair and her features by no means disagreeable, yet not collectively alluring; her age was forty-six, yet she looked much older. Her face generally presented a mild and calm expression, yet at intervals when sorrowful or excited, the feeling was evinced by a look in some degree fearful, and her emotions of scorn or anger were marked by a kind of convulsive painful movement.

It was amid this first sketch of her past life she remembered the doctor had not attended mass, which she besought him instantly to do in the chapel of the Conciergerie; praying him to say it on her account, and in honour of our Lady, whose intercession she might thus obtain, as the Virgin was her patroness, to whom, amid all her crimes and dissoluteness, she had never ceased to offer up her prayers. To this M. Pirot consented, and it was upon his return that he heard, from a M. Seney, that the sentence of death upon the marchioness was pronounced, and that her hand was to be cut off. This rigorous addition to her punishment, which was subsequently mitigated, induced him immediately to revisit his penitent. Upon his entrance she received him with much serenity, hoping he had earnestly prayed for her, and requesting to know whether she should have the consolation of receiving the sacrament before death.

"Madam," replied the doctor, "if you are condemned you will then certainly be deprived of that consolation, and I should but deceive if I could encourage such an expectation."

He then cited the case of the Constable Saint-Paul, against which the marchioness mentioned those of MM. de Cinq Mars and de Thou.

"I do not think," said M. Pirot, "this was a favour conceded to them, as it is not related either in the Memoirs of Montresor, or in any other work which gives details of their execution." M. Pirot then stated that the usual regulations as regarded criminals would be observed in respect to her; that communion was not absolutely requisite for salvation; that there was a spiritual communion in reading the word; and that if she detested her crime, had faith and charity, death would be as a martyrdom and a second baptism. The marchioness now contrasted her situation with that of her death, probably at Liège impenitent, or without the expiation of her crimes upon the scaffold, and expressed the sincere regret she felt for the boldness and indifference evinced towards her judges, avowing a perfect submission to the sentence to be pronounced by the president, and good will towards her prosecutor who had obtained it; thanking them both with much humility, as her future salvation seemed dependent upon its infliction. The doctor was about to encourage this feeling, when the door opened, and dinner was announced. She immediately placed herself at table along with the attendants of the prison, who never quitted her apartment, with a mind and manner as easy and unembarrassed, as though she were doing over the honours of her own table.

She desired the two men and the woman, who watched and attended upon her, to seat themselves at the table, and turning towards the doctor,

"Sir," said she, "you will excuse ceremony upon your account; these excellent persons have been accustomed to take their meals with me, for the sake of society; and we will now avail ourselves of it if you have no objection." Then, turning towards the woman, she said, "My poor Madame du Rus, I have been very troublesome to you for some time, but have a little more patience, you will soon be rid of me. You can go to Draset tomorrow; you will have time enough for that, for about seven or eight o'clock, you will have nothing more to do with me, for I shall be entirely engaged with my confessor, and you will not be allowed to enter. From that hour you are free, for I do not think you would have the heart to stay and witness my execution."

She said this with the most perfect self-possession and simplicity; and as those present turned aside to conceal their tears, she herself seemed to feel for them. Then observing that the dinner remained upon the table, no one partaking of it, she invited the doctor to take his soup, apologising for its common quality as unfit to be offered to him. For herself, she took some broth and two eggs, excusing herself to her companions for not having offered to assist them; but pointing out also, that neither knife nor fork had been allowed her so to do. Shortly after, she asked permission of the doctor to drink to his good health, to which he replied, by a similar request, at which act of condescension she seemed greatly pleased.

"To-morrow," said she, as she placed her glass upon the table, "is a fast day, and although ——"

"Madam," replied M. Pirot, "if your usual food be requisite for your support, you need not be scrupulous; for the rule of the church is not compulsory in a case of this kind."

The marchioness promised to avail herself of the privilege if it were necessary, but hoped that with some slight addition to the day's fare, and the two fresh eggs she should take after the question, it would be unnecessary. It is true, says the priest from whom these details are obtained, that I was dismayed at this sang-froid, and hearing her order with the greatest calmness the slight addition to her usual meal.

The dinner over, writing materials were brought in; but prior to commencing the confession of her crimes, she addressed a letter to her husband. For at this period she exhibited so much affection for him, that the doctor, wishing to prove its truth, remarked that he feared it was not reciprocated, since her husband had abandoned her during the trial. The marchioness, however, observed, we must not always judge by appearances. M. de Brinvilliers had ever felt an interest in her, and had fulfilled in all respects his duty in so far as it was within his power; that their correspondence had been always continued; if he had not visited her in prison it was, that, being overwhelmed with debts, he could not return to Paris. Her letter to him expressed the kindest feeling; she requested forgiveness for her conduct, and fully pardoned her enemies who had brought her to the disgraceful death she was to suffer. She expressed a hope also that he would forgive the ignominy this might cast upon himself, and concluded by confiding her children to his care, and recommending him to consult, for their sakes, Madame Marillac and Madame Consté; with a fervent request for his prayers on her behalf.

The doctor read this letter with attention, but remarked that one of its sentences was unbecoming; it was that which mentioned her enemies; adding,

"You have had no enemies but your crimes; and those you even allude to as such are those who revere the memory of your father and your brothers, whom you should have loved much more than they did."

"But, sir," replied the marchioness, "are they not my enemies who have thus pursued me unto death, and is it not a Christian duty to pardon and forgive them?"

"Madam," he replied, "they are not your enemies. You are the enemy of the human race; no one is yours, for it is impossible to think of your crimes without the deepest horror."

"And for that very reason," she answered, "I bear no resentment against them, and would earnestly wish to see in Paradise those who have most contributed to bring me into the situation in which I am."

"Madame," said the doctor, "what mean you? It is thus they speak sometimes who wish the death of others. Explain yourself, I request."

"Heaven forbid," she continued, "you should place such a construction upon my words. May they, on the contrary, enjoy a long prosperity in this world, and infinite glory in that to come. Dictate another letter, sir, and I will write what you consider most becoming."

This letter finished, the marchioness now wished to give attention exclusively to her confession, and requested the doctor to write from her narration; for "I have committed so many sins, that were I to do this verbally, I should never be assured I had fully revealed them." They then knelt, praying for the grace of the holy spirit; and after repeating the Veni Creator, Salve Regina, and the Confiteor, the marchioness commenced her narration. At nine o'clock Father Chavigny entered the room, and although the marchioness seemed vexed at his visit, she nevertheless received him in a friendly manner.

"But why has he come?" added she, turning towards the doctor.

"It is better," replied he, "that you should not be left alone."

"Are you about to leave me then," she exclaimed, with a thrill almost of terror.

"Madame," answered Pirot, "I will comply with your wishes; yet I should feel obliged if you would allow me to return home for a few hours, during which Chavigny will remain."

"Ah, sir," she cried, in much excitement, "you promised not to quit me but in death, and you now leave me! Oh think, that it was this morning only that I saw you for the first time, and that already you are more to me than one even of my oldest friends."

To this Pirot answered, that if now he sought repose, it was but to renew his duties with more effect upon the morrow, adding, it was the more necessary, as should that be her last day, they would have need, even by her own admission, of all the energies they possessed. He reminded her that he had been engaged, for thirteen hours, in prayer and other offices on her account; stating also that his health being weak he was fearful, without the relaxation he now sought, he should be unable to assist her at the last. The marchioness pressed his attendance no longer, but would not permit his departure without refreshment, and desiring a carriage to be fetched for him, still earnestly entreating his return at six o'clock the next day. Upon returning the next morning, Pirot found Chavigny and the marchioness in prayer; the former was in tears, but the latter, always calm, received him with the same feeling which she had shown on his departure.

After detailing how the night had been passed, writing to her sister, Madame de Marillac, and to M. Consté, in prayer, accompanied by Chavigny, with an interval only of two hours quiet sleep, she complied with the proposal of M. Pirot, and resumed her devotions with the "Veni Sancte Spiritus." This concluded, he was about to continue her confession, when she said,—

"Sir, permit me first to ask a question upon a point of great anxiety to me. You gave me yesterday great hopes in the mercy of God, but I dare not think that I can finally be saved, without the pains of purgatory. Were even my love of God much more intense than it can be, I could not expect salvation without suffering the punishment which is due unto my sins. Now I have heard that the fire of the place where the soul lingers for a time, is similar in all respects to that of hell, where the condemned remain for ever. Tell me now, I pray you,—how can the soul, which feels its existence in purgatory at the moment of its separation from the body, be assured that it is not in hell? How can it be aware that the fire, which burns without destroying, will be one day withheld? since the torment it endures is as that of the damned, the place similar, the punishment the same."

"Madame," replied the doctor, "God is too just to add doubt to the punishment he inflicts. At the moment of the separation of the soul, it receives the judgment of the Creator, hears the sentence which condemns, or the mercy which absolves; knows whether it be renewed in the spirit, or abides in mortal sin; whether it be in the fire that is never quenched, or the flames which endure but for a time. The sentence you will hear the moment the sword of the executioner has freed you from this life; unless, already redeemed, you pass immediately into the presence of the blessed."

The marchioness expressed her entire faith in his opinions; and feeling her mind more composed, she continued her confession until the expiration of about an hour and a half, when the first registrar arrived to read to her the judgment pronounced by the court. She received the order to descend for this purpose with much calmness, still kneeling, and slightly turning her head; then, without the slightest tremor in her voice, said directly—

"I have but a few words to add, and then I am entirely resigned to you."

Thereupon, with the utmost tranquillity, she finished the dictation of her confession to the doctor, besought him to offer up with her a short prayer; then, putting on her veil, and taking with her a book of prayer, which Chavigny had left, she followed the turnkey to the torture chamber, where her sentence was to be read. They commenced by an examination, which lasted five hours; during which she revealed all she had promised, but denied any accomplices, affirming that she knew neither in what the poisons consisted, nor their antidotes; and at the end of this, the judges finding no further information could be obtained, desired the registrar to read her sentence. After reciting the indictment, it continued thus:

"That the marchioness should make a public avowal of, and demand pardon for, her crimes before the principal entrance of Notre Dame; to which she should be taken in a common cart, bare-footed, a rope around her neck, holding a lighted torch of about two pounds' weight, and thence be conducted to the Place de Grève, where she should be decapitated, her body burnt, and her ashes scattered to the winds; being first submitted to the torture of both kinds to obtain the names of her accomplices; declaring, moreover, all her property inherited by her from her family confiscated; and levying, also, a fine of four thousand livres to the king, four hundred for masses for the repose of the souls of her victims, ten thousand livres to the Dame Mangot, and the entire expenses of her own trial and that of Lachaussée. Dated July, 1676."

She heard it without fear, and without the slightest weakness; but when it was finished,

"Sir," said she to the registrar, "have the goodness to repeat it; the cart, which was unexpected, so engaged my attention, that I was indifferent to the rest."

The registrar complied with her request; then, being now given over to the executioner, he advanced towards her: she immediately recognised him, by the rope in his hands, and quietly joined and extended her own, regarding him coldly from head to foot, but without uttering a word. The judges retired in succession, and displayed as they did so the terrible apparatus of the torture. The marchioness surveyed it with the utmost firmness; then, perceiving three buckets of water, she turned to the registrar, not wishing to speak to the executioner, and said,

"It is to drown me, doubtless, that so much water has been brought here; for surely, sir, so much, considering my size, you have not, I trust, the desire to make me swallow it." The executioner, without a word, took off her veil, and successively all her clothes, then placed her against the wall, and made her sit upon the wooden frame of the ordinary torture, which was about two feet high. The questions as to her accomplices, &c., were now again repeated, to which she replied as before, adding only—

"If you will not believe my word, my body is in your power, you can torture that."

The registrar upon this made a sign to the executioner. He fastened immediately the feet of the marchioness to two rings placed before her; then turning her body backwards, he fixed her hands also to two rings in the wall, distant about three feet from each other. By this the head was at the same height as the feet, whilst the body, supported by the trestle, formed a half curve, as if resting upon a wheel. Still further to stretch the limbs, the executioner gave the rack two turns, which brought the feet before distant about a foot from the rings, six inches nearer. The following is the Procès-Verbal, which can alone relate the horrors which ensued:—

"Upon the small trestle, and during the racking, she several times said, 'Oh! my God! they kill me, and yet I have spoken truth.' Water* was given, she was much convulsed, but said only 'You slay me.' Admonished to name her accomplices, she replied that she had only one, a man, who, ten years since, had asked for poison to rid himself of his wife, but that he was dead. Whereupon the torture was repeated, she was slightly convulsed, but would not speak. It was again repeated, with similar results. Admonished to say why, if she had no accomplice, she had written from the Conciergerie to Penautier, to urge him to do all for her he could, reminding him her interests were his, she replied, she had never been certainly aware of any connexion between Penautier and Sainte-Croix relative to his poisons, but that as a bill had been found in the casket of Sainte-Croix, which concerned Penautier, and having seen them often together, she thought this friendship might have extended to a commerce of this kind between them; that certainly she had ventured to write to Penautier, as if she knew it was so, such a step not affecting her interests, for either he was an accomplice with Sainte-Croix or he was not; if he were, he would do all in his power to assist her, if not, it was but a letter lost, and that was all. The torture was repeated, she was greatly convulsed, but said she could add nothing to her former statement; to do so would be to sin against her conscience." The ordinary torture was now concluded. Already had the sufferer swallowed the half of the water she had thought to be sufficient to drown her. They now proceeded to the extraordinary application of its pains: thereupon, instead of the trestle of two feet and a-half, one of three feet and a-half high was placed beneath her, and as this was done without extending the cords, the limbs were again stretched, and the ligatures at the wrists and feet were so compressed, that the flesh was cut and the blood flowedr apidly. The Procès-Verbal continues: "The torture by the injection of water was renewed, whereupon she cried, several times, in great agony, beseeching the mercy of Heaven. Again admonished to confess, she said they might kill her, but she would not lay the guilt of perjury upon her soul. The torture was repeated, she was again convulsed, but was silent. Admonished to reveal the composition of her poisons and their antidote, she replied that she was ignorant of this, remembering only that toads formed a part; that Sainte-Croix had never revealed the secret; she thought, moreover, they were not prepared by him, but by the apothecary Glazer; some she thought were merely arsenical; that as for the antidote, she believed it was only milk, and that Sainte-Croix had said, that provided it had been taken in the morning, and a glass of it upon the first effects of the poison, there was then no cause to fear. Admonished to say whether she had more to add to this, she replied, she had confessed all she knew; that they might now slay her, but she could reveal no more. The torture was twice repeated, but she spoke not. Upon the third time, she answered only with a deep groan and an ejaculation to Heaven. Upon which she was unbound, removed from the rack, and placed before the fire in the customary manner."

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* The water was given thus:—The executioner had near him four jars full of water, each containing about two pints and a-half, and for the extraordinary torture eight of the same size, making for the ordinary ten, and for the latter twenty pints of water, which the victim was forced to swallow. The executioner held a vessel, like a wine-strainer, in his hand; he placed this against the mouth, and poured two pints and a-half down it, leaving an interval for the prisoner to confess, or reply to the questions put; but if he continued to deny, he renewed the operation until the eight jars were empty. This was supposed to cause all the horrible feelings of death by drowning, and was protracted with the most cruel art.

It was near this, stretched upon the bed of torture, that Pirot met her again, for, feeling himself utterly unable to endure the horror of such a scene, he had obtained her sanction to retire, and say a mass, to the end the Almighty might endow her with patience and courage to endure her fearful pains: nor had he prayed in vain.

"Ah! sir," said the marchioness, as soon as she perceived him, "I have long desired your return, to receive your consolations. Oh! this torture has been prolonged, and dreadfully afflicting; but now I have no more to deal with men, and God alone now will occupy my thoughts."

"And on that account," replied the priest, "these sufferings are to be considered as blessings; every torture being now the means of inclining you towards Heaven; therefore, to God alone must your thoughts and hopes be directed, and from Him must you demand, like the penitent King of Israel, a place amid the elect of his people."

Upon this the marchioness arose, supported by the doctor and the executioner, and, entering the chapel, the two former knelt at the celebration of the mass. By this time some persons, induced by curiosity, had gained admittance, as they could not exclude them, whilst their presence disturbed the devotions of the marchioness, the executioner closed the choir, and placed his prisoner behind the high altar. It was then that Pirot, for the first time, marked the change which had taken place in her appearance. Her face, ordinarily pale, was highly flushed; her eyes gleamed with feverish excitement, and her body was overcome by fits of convulsive shivering. The doctor wished to address to her a few words of consolation, but she interrupted him, saying—

"Are you aware of the ignominy and disgrace of my sentence? Do you know it includes fire?"

He made her no answer, but, believing her in want of refreshment, desired the executioner to bring some wine. The gaoler appeared soon after with it; the marchioness barely sipped a little, and returned the glass to Pirot, who, perceiving at the time that her neck was uncovered, placed his handkerchief around her, and asked the gaoler for a pin to fasten it, but he delaying so to do, as if afraid she might strangle herself, she said, with a melancholy smile,—

"Ah! sir, you have now nothing to fear. M. Pirot will be my guarantee. I shall not attempt to use it against myself."

The gaoler immediately offered it, expressing regret at his delay, and, assuring her, whatever others might have done, he had never suspected such an act, and requested to be permitted to kiss her hand, which she instantly gave, beseeching him to offer up prayers to God for her sake.

This he very feelingly promised to do, and as he retired, she again thus addressed Pirot:

"Did you hear me, sir, I said there was even fire in my sentence;—fire! do you understand me; and although it may be said my body will not be cast into the flames until after death, it is still an infamous reproach to my memory; they spare me the pains of death by fire, and thereby may free me from a death of despair, but disgrace is nevertheless stamped upon my name, and it is of that I think."

"Madame," he replied, "it is a matter equally indifferent, whether your body may be cast into the flames to be thus reduced to ashes, or committed to earth, to be there devoured by worms; whether it be drawn upon a hurdle, and cast into the common sewer, or embalmed with the spices of the east, and laid in a monarch's tomb; perish as it may, it will rise again, more glorious it may be, than that of some king of the earth, which now reposes in its gilded coffin; the pomp of the grave is for those that survive and not for the dead."

At this instant, a noise was heard at the door of the choir; the doctor immediately advanced, and found it arose from a tradesman who disputed with the executioner to obtain entrance. It appeared, he had sold to Madame de Brinvilliers, before her departure from France, a carriage for which she still owed an instalment of two hundred francs: but the marchioness not knowing the cause, called immediately to Pirot, who hastened with the executioner to her.

"Is my hour come," said she, "I am hardly yet prepared; but no matter, I am ready."

Pirot reassured her, and explained the cause.

"He is right," she replied, "tell him," addressing herself to the executioner, "that I will see the debt discharged as far as it is in my power;" then as he left, she said to Pirot, "must I so soon depart? can they not spare me a little longer? for although I am ready as I said; I am not, indeed I am not prepared!"

"We may probably, Madam," he replied, "yet have time granted us until the evening."

But as the marchioness seemed yet doubtful and anxious upon thiis; the executioner who had heard the conversation, and judged his evidence to be conclusive, turned his head from the other side of the altar, and assured her, she had three or four hours to live. She thanked him, and turning towards the doctor, expressed a desire of leaving the rosary she carried to her sister, but added:

"I am fearful, that upon recollecting the crime I meditated against her, she will shrink from its acceptance, but should this not be the case, it would be a great consolation unto me, to think she wears it after my death, and that thus I may be remembered in prayer."

The doctor comforted her, by recalling to mind the kindness she had already experienced, and besought her to pray earnestly, as became a repentant criminal, adding, he would himself deliver the rosary to Mademoiselle d'Aubray; most certain that it would be affectionately received. Seven o'clock struck, and as the sound yet vibrated through the chapel, the executioner stood before her; she knew the hour was now come, and seizing the doctor's arm, exclaimed: "A few moments more, but yet a few moments, I beseech you." The executioner now tied her hands, and with a tolerably firm step she advanced to the altar, between the chaplain of the prison and Pirot; they here sung, Veni Creator, Salve Regina, and Tantum ergo, and bestowed the final benediction of the Holy Sacrament; she was then led from the chapel supported by the doctor, and the executioner's assistant. About ten or twelve persons had now assembled, whereupon finding herself suddenly before them, she drew back; and although her hands were tied, contrived to pull her cap over the greater part of her face, and by this movement, broke the rosary, from which a few beads fell; she continued however still to advance, but was stopped by the doctor, until the assistant had collected the beads, and placed them in her hands; she thanked him with great humility for his kindness, and added:

"I know I have nothing left me in this world, as even the clothes I have upon me belong to you; but I beg before I die, suffer me to give this rosary to M. Pirot; it is valueless in itself, and I deliver it to him, only that he may, on my part, convey it to my sister."

"Madame," replied the man, "although it is the custom that the clothes of the criminal belong to us; yet you may freely dispose of what you have, were it a matter even of much greater value."

The priest who led her by the arm, felt a thrill, as the pride of the marchioness acknowledged his civility, but the feeling that arose from this was internal, and her face exhibited no trace of the emotion. She had now reached the vestibule of the Conciergerie, between the courtyard, and the first gate, where she was seated until the dress was put on, in which the public confession was to be made. At every step her distressing anxiety increased, and it was in the deepest anguish she turned and saw the executioner with the shift worn by the criminals in his hands. The door of the vestibule was next opened, and about fifty spectators were admitted; amongst whom were the Countess de Soissons, Madame du Refugé, Mademoiselle de Scudery, M. de Roquelaure, and the Abbé de Chimay; the marchioness upon this was overcome by shame, and leaning towards the doctor, said,

"And will this man undress me again, as in the torture chamber? are not these preparations cruel, turning my thoughts at such a time from God."

The executioner heard this, and reassured her, saying, the dress he held would be passed over her other clothes; this done, he then raised her cap, tied her hands again with the cord, placed a rope around her waist and neck, and then kneeling, took off her stockings and slippers. She now raised her manacled hands towards Pirot.

"Oh! sir," said she, "you witness what they do, pray, pray, approach and console me."

He did so, sustaining her head upon his breast, and endeavoured to assuage her grief; but she, in a tone of the most heartrending grief added, casting her eyes upon the crowd, who intently watched the scene:

"Oh! does not this appear a strange and barbarous curiosity!"

"Madame," replied he, while the tears were in his eyes, "consider not the earnestness of these people, in such a point of view, although it be the true one; think of it only as a part of the expiation of your crimes."

As he said this, the executioner placed the lighted torch in her hands, and as it was very heavy, Pirot supported it with his right hand, whilst the registrar for the second time read the sentence aloud. During this she was greatly agitated, and still more so, when upon entering the vestibule, she saw the crowd which awaited the procession in the yard; she then stopped, and with a passionate movement, as if she would bury her feet in the earth, said:

"Sir! think you that after this, Mons. de Brinvilliers can possess so little feeling as to endure life."

The doctor tried to calm her excitement, but his words were in vain, her face became convulsed, her eyebrows sternly knit, her eyes seemed to emit fire, her mouth was distorted, and, for a moment, the demon reappeared in every feature.

It was during this paroxysm, which lasted for a quarter of an hour, that Lebrun, who was close by, became so impressed by the effect, that the following night, unable to sleep, and having its reflection continually present to his mind, made the beautiful sketch now in the Louvre, and near this another sketch of a tiger, to show that the principal traits were the same, and bore a strong resemblance to each other. She advanced with the crucifix in her hand to the door of the prison, where the cart awaited her. It was one of the smallest that could be obtained, bearing yet about it the signs of the low purposes for which it was used, without a seat, a little straw scattered about it, and drawn by a wretched horse, which seemed to complete the ignominy of the vehicle. The executioner made her get in first, which she did with great quickness, as if to avoid the gaze of the crowd, crouching like a wild beast in the left corner, with her back turned towards the people. Pirot next got in and seated himself on her right hand; then the executioner, who was placed before her, stretching his legs between those of the doctor. His assistant was seated outside, with his back towards them and his legs upon the shafts.

It was thus that Madame de Sevigné, who was upon the bridge of Notre Dame, with *la bonne Descars*, saw a cap only—(Letter 69)—as the marchioness was conducted to Notre Dame. The procession had scarcely advanced a few steps, when her face became hideously convulsed again, which so much alarmed the doctor, that he earnestly besought the explanation of the cause. She at first denied there was any; but upon repeating his entreaty, cast her eyes upon the executioner, and besought him to sit in front, so as to conceal *that man*. Saying this, she raised her manacled hands towards a man who followed the cart on horseback. The executioner turned his head, and complied immediately with her wish, making a sign as he did so, and almost whispering, "Yes, yes; I understand well what it is;" and as upon this the doctor becoming more urgent in his inquiries, she said:

"The man who has followed the cart so closely is Desgrais, who arrested me at Liège, and who so ill-used me when his prisoner; so that I could not, seeing him thus here, overcome the emotion you have observed."

The doctor endeavoured to subdue the feeling, reminding her he had but fulfilled his instructions; upon which, after a violent struggle, the marchioness requested the executioner to resume his former position. He hesitated at first, but upon an intimation of Pirot's he did so, and the marchioness regarded Desgrais with a mild expression, repeating a prayer on his behalf.

They had now reached the place before Notre Dame; the executioner got out, lifted the marchioness from the cart, and placed her upon the pavement, followed by M. Pirot, and ascended the steps of the church, and placed himself behind her; the registrar being on the right hand and the executioner upon the left, and around her a vast concourse of persons who were in the church, of which all the doors were open. They made her kneel and placed in her hands the lighted torch, which hitherto the doctor had almost always borne. The registrar then read her public confession, which she began to repeat, but in so low a tone, that the executioner desired her to raise her voice, saying, "Louder, louder;" whereupon with firmness and solemnity, she slowly uttered—

"I acknowledge that, wickedly and revengefully, I have poisoned my father and my brothers, and attempted similarly the life of my sister, to obtain possession of their property, for which I ask pardon of God, the King, and the laws of the realm."

This concluded, the executioner raised her in his arms and placed her in the cart, but without giving her again the torch, the doctor followed, and the procession moved towards the Place de Grève. From that moment until they reached the scaffold her eyes were never raised from the crucifix which M. Pirot held in his left hand; endeavouring, by the consolations of religion, to divert her attention from the fearful murmur which at intervals arose around them, and amid which it was easy to distinguish some violent imprecations.

Upon reaching the Place de Grève, the cart stopped at some distance from the scaffold, when the registrar, M. Drouet, approached her, and asked her if she wished to add any thing to her previous confession, as the twelve commissioners were at the Hotel de Ville, and were prepared to receive it. M. Pirot advised her for the last time to confess all she knew, but the marchioness replied, I have said all I know and can say no more; which at the instigation of the doctor she repeated as loudly as she was now able to do. Some delay occurred, owing to the difficulty of reaching the scaffold in consequence of the crowd, during which awful interval she regarded M. Pirot with a calm look, and said,

"Sir, it is not here that we must separate; you have promised not to quit me in life: I trust you will keep your word."

"Most certainly, madame," he replied; "death will alone part us. I will not quit you; do not disturb your mind with such a fear."

"I expected this of you," she replied; "you will be with me upon the scaffold—near me—and now I must bid you farewell; and as that which awaits me upon the scaffold may by its awful preparations divert my mind, suffer me now to express my gratitude; for if I am inclined humbly to endure the sentence of the judges of earth, and contritely to await that of heaven; it is to you, to your cares I owe this merciful disposition of mind. All that remains for me now is to beseech your forgiveness for the anxiety and trouble I have caused;" and as tears interrupted his reply, "Is it not so; you do—fully forgive me?"

He wished to reassure her, but dared not attempt it, lest his grief should overcome him; which the marchioness observing, again said;

"I entreat you, sir, to forgive me, and not to regret the time you have bestowed on me. You will say upon the scaffold the De Profundis upon my death-stroke, and a mass to-morrow for me; you will do this; you will promise me; is it not so?"

"Yes, madame," said he, hardly able to reply; "be composed, I will comply with every request."

At this instant the executioner approached the cart, and lifted the marchioness from it, followed by the doctor; she then ascended the scaffold, and was made to kneel before a bar of wood which divided it; the priest knelt by her side, his face towards the Hotel de Ville, whilst the marchioness fronted the river; so that in this manner he was enabled to address her to the last. The executioner now cut off the hair which hung around her neck; and although these preparations lasted for half an hour, and were at times even harshly conducted, she uttered no complaint, and gave no other signs of grief than by the tears which silently fell, and denoted her inward agony of mind. He next removed the top part of the dress she had worn from the Conciergerie, bound a handkerchief over her eyes, and desired her to hold her head erect, which she did, apparently intent only on the exhortations of the doctor, repeating at intervals the prayers he recited, when they bore immediate reference to her situation. The executioner had in the mean time drawn from beneath the folds of his mantle a long sabre, which he had thus hitherto concealed; and as, after pronouncing absolution, M. Pirot saw he was not yet ready, he said these words as a form of prayer, which the marchioness slowly repeated after him:

"Jesus, son of David and of Mary, have pity upon me; Mary, daughter of David, and mother of Jesus, pray for me; my God, I abandon my body which is but dust, and leave it to man to burn, and cast it as ashes to the wind; in the fulness of faith you will raise it once again, and reunite it to my soul; suffer, O Lord, that my soul may reascend to the source from whence it proceeded; from you it came, unto you let it return; and as you are of it the origin and commencement, so likewise, O Lord, be its continuance and end."

The words were hardly uttered, when the doctor heard a dull, heavy blow, like the sound given by a cleaver, when dividing flesh upon a block, and immediately the voice ceased. The sword had passed so swiftly, that the doctor had not noticed the flash of the steel; and, for the moment, not seeing the head fall, feared the executioner's hand had failed, and that he was about to repeat the stroke. But his fear was momentary, the head almost directly inclined towards the left side, fell upon the shoulder, and thence rolled behind, whilst the body fell forwards, supported by the rail, and so remained to the gaze of the populace, whilst the doctor stood and repeated as he had promised, a "De Profundis." As he finished, the executioner stood before him.

"Well, sir," said he, as he coolly wiped his face, "was not that an excellent stroke? I commend myself always to God on such occasions, and he has never deserted me hitherto. For many days this lady has disquieted me; but I had six masses said, and felt my heart strengthened and upheld."

Upon this, he drew a bottle from beneath his mantle, raised it to his lips, and drank a little; then, taking under one arm the body, dressed as it was, and with the other hand, picking up the head, he threw both immediately upon the wood pile behind the scaffold, to which his assistant immediately set fire.

"On the morrow," says Madame de Sevigné, "the bones of the marchioness were sought for, as the people believed she was a saint."

In 1814, M. d'Offemont, father of the present proprietor of the château where the marchioness poisoned her father, alarmed at the approach of the allied troops, made in one of the towers numerous hiding places, wherein he placed his silver plate, and other valuable property. On the retirement of the army beyond the frontier, they ventured to withdraw them; and as they sounded the walls, for fear of omitting any portion of the property, one of them returned a hollow sound, indicating a cavity unknown. The wall was immediately pulled down, and displayed a large cabinet, fitted up as a laboratory, in which they found a furnace, chemical instruments, several phials hermetically sealed, containing a liquid still unknown, and four packets of different coloured powders. Unfortunately, those who discovered, attached too little importance to them; and instead of submitting these to the investigation of modern science, destroyed all they found, frightened themselves at the deadly substance that they probably contained. Thus was lost this unexpected and probably last opportunity of analyzing the ingredients of the poisons of Sainte-Croix and the Marchioness de Brinvilliers.

THE CENCI.

If, gentle reader, you were at Rome, and visited the Villa Pamfili, you would doubtless (after having enjoyed, amid its gardens and ornamental fountains, the cool retreats so seldom to be met with in the capital of the Christian world) descend towards the Janiculum by a delightful road, in which, about halfway, stands the fountain Paulina. Passing this, and having lingered for a short time upon the terrace of the church of San Pietro in Montorio, which commands a view of the entire extent of Rome; you would next visit the cloister of Bramante, in the centre of which, at the depth of a few feet, upon the spot where St. Peter was crucified, a little temple, of a mixed Greek and Christian architecture is erected, from whence you reascend, through one of its side-doors, into the church itself. Your cicerone would now point out to you, in the first chapel to the right, the "Christ Scourged" of Sebastian del Piombo, and, in the third, to the left, "Christ in the Sepulchre," by Fiamingo; and, these *chefs-d'œuvres* examined, he would next lead you to the pictures painted at each extremity of its transept by Vasari and Salviati, showing you, and regretfully, a copy of the "Martyrdom" of St. Peter, by Guido, upon the principal altar, where, for three centuries, the "Transfiguration of Raphael," taken away by the French in 1809, and restored to the Pope by the Allies in 1814, was almost worshipped. As you probably have already admired this masterpiece of art at the Vatican, do not check the narrative of your guide, but search, in the meanwhile, at the foot of the altar, for a tombstone, which you will readily know by a cross and the single word—*Orate*. Beneath this slab was interred Beatrice Cenci.

She was the daughter of Francesco Cenci, and, according to the doctrine, that, for good or evil, men reflect the spirit of their age, he was then the incarnation of its worst features. This will be readily seen by a rapid glance over the history of the time. Upon the death of Innocent VIII., August 11th, 1492, Alexander VI. ascended the throne of the pontiffs; who, as the cardinal Roderic Lenzuoli Borgia, had five children born to him by Rosa Vanozza. These were: Francesco, duke of Gandia; Cesar, duke of Valentinois; Lucretia, who was married four times; Guifry, count de Squillace; and another of whom very little is known. The most eminent of these was Cesar, whose scheme of making himself the King of Italy, must have been inevitably successful, but for one unforeseen contingency,—the sudden death of his father, and his own dangerous illness, the result of taking the poisoned wine the Pope had prepared for the cardinal Adrian, whose wealth he coveted.

Pius III. reigned twenty-five days: upon the twenty-sixth he was poisoned. Cesar Borgia could command the votes of the eighteen Spanish cardinals in the Sacred College; these he sold to Julian de la Rovere, who was elected Pope, under the title of Julius II. To the Rome of Nero succeeded the Athens of Pericles. Leo X. was the successor of Julius II., and Christianity then evinced a paganism which, passing from works of art to the manners of social life, became the peculiar characteristic of the period. Crime suddenly disappears to make way for vices, yet of good s Alcibiades committed and Catullus sung. Leo X. died after ight years, during which, Michael Angelo, Raffaele, Leonardo orreggio, Titian, Andrea del Sarto, Giulio Romano, Ariosto, ni, and Machiavelli had flourished. Giulio de Medici and olonna were candidates for the papacy upon his death. Equal licy as in merit, neither could obtain the majority, and the con- prolonged to the great dissatisfaction of the cardinals. At last nal de Medici, more weary than the others by the proceedings, to elect, some say the son of a weaver, others of a brewer, of of whom no one had hitherto thought, then governor of Spain he absence of Charles V. His pleasantry was successful: Adrian ted Pope. He was a genuine Fleming—ignorant of Italian—who, arrival at Rome, when viewing the chefs-d'œuvres of antiquity, d at such a vast expense by Leo X., was anxious to destroy them, g that they were the idols of the ancients. His first act as Pope send Francesco Chieregato to the Diet of Nuremberg, with these tions, which serve to illustrate the manners of the times.

Avow openly," said he, "that God has suffered this schism and perse- n, because of the sins of men; more especially those of the priests and tes of the church, for we know that the holy see has been stained by minable crimes."

Adrian wished to restore the simple and austere faith and practice of primitive church, and carried this spirit of reform even to the slightest ails. Of the hundred grooms, for instance, maintained by Leo, he re- ned twelve only, in order, as he said, to have two more than the car- nals. Such a pope could not reign for any length of time; he died, herefore, at the expiration of a year. The day after this event, the door f the house of his physician was decorated with garlands of flowers, with his inscription—"To the Liberator of his country."

Giulio de Medici and Pompeio Colonna, were again competitors for the pontificate. Intrigues recommenced, and opinions were so divided in the conclave, that the cardinals again proposed to resort to the election of a third candidate; the name of Orsini was even mentioned, when Giulio de Medici suggested the following ingenious expedient to relieve them from their embarrassment. He wanted but five votes; five of his partisans offered to bet with five of their opponents a sum of one hundred thousand ducats against him, that Giulio de Medici would not be elected. Upon the scrutiny which immediately took place, Giulio was elected; but nothing could be said. The five cardinals, who had voted in his favour, had not sold themselves; they had wagered, that was all. In consequence, the 18th of November, 1523, Giulio de Medici was proclaimed pope, as Clement VII., and generously paid the same day the hundred thousand ducats which his partisans had lost.

It was in his pontificate, and during the seven months when Rome was conquered by the Lutheran soldiers, under the Constable de Bourbon, that Francesco Cenci was born. He was the son of Nicholas Cenci, apostolic treasurer under Pius V. As this venerable prelate had devoted himself to the spiritual rather than the temporal government of his kingdom, Nicholas Cenci had profited by this circumstance, to amass a sum nearly equivalent to two millions five hundred thousand francs of our present money,* which

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* About £10,000 sterling.

Francesco, his only son, inherited. His youth was passed during the reign of popes, whose attention had been so exclusively engaged by the Lutheran schism, that they had no time to think of events of less importance. The result was, that Francesco, naturally vicious, and possessor of an immense fortune, which enabled him to purchase impunity, abandoned himself without restraint to all the debaucheries of his corrupted imagination and passionate desires. Five times imprisoned for his infamous crimes, he had as often escaped punishment by the payment of nearly five million of francs. It must be also remembered, that popes were much in want of money at this time. Under the pontificate of Gregory XIII., serious attention was drawn to the acts of Francesco. Under the Bolognese Buoncampagno, every crime was tolerated, provided always the assassin and the judges were well paid. Murder and rape were so common, that justice was not cognizant of such trifles if no one appeared to prosecute the crime. So the piety of Gregory XIII. was rewarded, and he had the joy of witnessing the day of Saint Bartholomew.

Francesco was then about forty-four or forty-five years of age, five feet four inches high, very strong, and extremely well proportioned, although rather thin; his hair was grayish, eyes large and expressive, although overhung too much by the upper eyelid; the nose long, lips thin, wearing generally an agreeable smile, which was changed into an indication of deadly hatred in the presence of an enemy; then, however slightly he might be excited, he was seized by a nervous trembling, which prolonged itself as a species of shivering fit long after the cause of the irritation had passed away; adroit in all manly exercises; an excellent horseman, he rode at times without resting from Rome to Naples, forty-one leagues distant from each other; journeying without fear of the brigands, though oftentimes alone, and with no other arms than a sword and a poniard. If his horse fell from fatigue, he bought another; if the purchase was refused, he seized it; if resistance were made, he struck, and that always with the point, never with the handle of his weapon. Moreover, being well known throughout the papal states, and his generosity admitted, no one opposed his wish; some yielded through fear, others from interest. Impious, sacrilegious, and an atheist, he never entered a church, or, if he did, it was to blaspheme, and not to pray. He had married an heiress, whose name is unknown, and who left him seven children, five boys and two girls. His second wife was Lucrezia Petroni, who, excepting the brilliant fairness of her complexion, was the perfect type of Roman beauty. As if every feeling of human nature was denied him, he hated his own offspring, a feeling which he hardly strove to conceal; and it is related of him, that when building a church in the court of his splendid palace, dedicated to St. Thomas, near the Tiber, he designed a catacomb, saying, "It is here I hope to bury them all."

When his three eldest sons, Giacomo, Christofero, and Rocco, were little more than boys, he sent them to the University of Salamanca, thinking doubtless to be in this manner freed from them at once, for he abandoned them entirely, not even supplying them with the means of existence; so that after a few months' struggle with every kind of privation and hardship, they were forced to return, begging their way barefooted from Spain to Italy. This occurred during the reign of Clement VIII.; the three youths therefore resolved to petition his holiness to obtain some slight annuity from the immense revenues of their father. They went to Frascati, where the pope was then erecting the beautiful Aldobrandini villa; stated their case, which Clement kindly considered, and directed Francesco to allow to each of them an annuity of two thousand crowns. He sought to evade it by every means in his power, but in vain; the order was too peremptory to be neglected. Soon after, he was for the third time imprisoned for his odious crimes; his sons again petitioned, praying for condign punishment upon their parent, who had thus disgraced their name. But the pope considered this proceeding odious and unnatural, and angrily refused its consideration. Francesco purchased his liberation at the price of one hundred thousand crowns. It may be supposed this proceeding of the sons only the more excited the hatred of their father, but as they were withdrawn from his rage, by reason of their independent annuity, it fell with the greater severity upon his two daughters. This soon became so intolerable, that the elder contrived to forward a petition to the pope, relating the treatment to which she was subjected, and beseeching his holiness either to procure her marriage, or to place her in a convent. Clement obliged Francesco to give her a dowery of sixty thousand crowns, and married her to Carlo Gabrielli, of a noble family of Gubbio. At the same time death relieved him of two sons, Rocco and Christofero; who were both killed within an interval of twelve months; the one by an ignorant surgeon whose name is unknown, and the other by Paolo Corsi de Massa, whilst he was attending mass. But his hatred and avarice pursued them even after their decease, for he refused to pay for the expenses of their interment. They were consigned to the tomb he had prepared for them, as men of the lowest order, without any funeral ceremonies. On viewing them he testified his pleasure at the loss of two such beings; but added that he should never be perfectly happy, until his five other children were buried near the first two, and that in the event of witnessing the death of the youngest he would set fire to his palace as a demonstration of joy. Francesco had in the mean time also adopted every precaution to prevent the flight or withdrawal of Beatrice, his youngest daughter, from his power. She was then about thirteen years of age, beautiful and innocent as the angels. Her long auburn hair like threads of gold, which is so seldom met with in Italy, that Raffaelle believing it divine, has made it the exclusive attribute of his Madonnas, was arranged over an exquisitely shaped forehead, and fell in luxuriant curls upon her shoulders. Her blue eyes were expressive, pleasing, and full of fire; she was of middle height, but well proportioned; and during the few short intervals when a momentary ray of happiness illumined her path, she seemed of a lively, joyous, and feeling disposition, but at the same time resolute and decisive. To be secure of his victim, her father immured her in an inner chamber of his palace of which he had alone the key. Here the inflexible gaoler brought every day her food. But suddenly, to the great astonishment of Beatrice, her father's manner changed; for as she grew up her beauty slowly unfolded as the leaves of a flower; and he to whom no crime was a stranger, already meditated her destruction, He combined for this purpose the influence of wealth, the cruelty of a tyrant, with the slow perseverance of a demon. Beatrice, bred up in the strictest seclusion, was guilty, ere she knew in what sin consisted. In this manner she lived three years. At the expiration of this time, Francesco was obliged to travel, whereupon Lucrezia Petroni, his wife, and Beatrice, addressed a memorial to the pope, detailing the outrages to which they were subject, and from which there was no escape. But prior to his departure Francesco had taken his precaution; all those who surrounded the pope were sold, or hoped to be purchased. The petition therefore never reached his holiness, and the two unfortunate women, remembering the anger of Clement against Christofero and Rocco, believed themselves as included in the same proscription, and entirely abandoned to their fate. Giacomo, the eldest son, profiting by the absence of his father, now came to visit them, accompanied by an abbé of his acquaintance named Guerra. The latter was a youth of about twenty-five years of age, a descendant of one of the noblest families of Rome, of a bold, resolute, and courageous character, whose handsome features were the theme and universal praise of female society; these were truly Roman. His eyes were blue, and of a mild lustrous expression; long auburn hair, beard and eyebrows of a chestnut colour, an extensive education, eloquence natural and impressive, united to a voice susceptible of the most varied tones; all these combined may give the reader some idea of the Abbé Guerra. He loved Beatrice at first sight, a feeling which she was not slow to return. The Council of Trent had not yet been held, ecclesiastics consequently were not interdicted from marriage, and it was agreed upon, that, on the return of Francesco, the abbé should demand the hand of Beatrice from her father.

After an interval of three months, during which they were completely ignorant of his 'whereabout,' Francesco returned, and immediately sought to make his daughter the companion of his crimes: Beatrice however was changed, she knew now the nature of his proposals, she was strengthened by the force of her affection for the abbé; prayers, threats, and violence, were in vain. The rage of Francesco was now vented upon his wife, whom he accused of betraying him, and he violently struck her. Lucrezia was a true she-wolf of the Roman breed; impassioned in love, vehement in revenge; she endured all, and forgave nothing.

After a few days interval, Guerra arrived; young, rich, handsome, and of noble extraction, he had every reason to hope success, yet he was brutally dismissed by Francesco. Thrice he reattempted to obtain his consent, but in vain, till finally Francesco, impatient at the lover's zeal, exclaimed,

"There was a reason why Beatrice should not marry."

Guerra required its explanation.

"It is," replied her father, "because she is my mistress."

He was thrilled with horror at this reply, of which at first he doubted the veracity; for three days he vainly sought an interview with Beatrice, at last he succeeded. His last hope was a denial of the shameless crime from her own lips: Beatrice avowed all. Hope henceforth fled from the lovers; they were for ever separated by an insurmountable abyss; yet no criminal design was yet awakened in the minds of either the wife, or the daughter: silence and darkness might have concealed his guilt, had not Francesco gained by violence, what by no other means he could obtain; from that hour the cup of endurance was full; Francesco's fate was sealed. The mind of Beatrice was of that facile character which is susceptible of the best and worst impressions; she could ascend towards the highest excellence, and sink into the lowest guilt. She told Lucrezia of this new outrage, which recalled the memory of her past wrongs; and both, increasing the hatred and revenge of each other, decided upon Francesco's death.

Guerra was now summoned to this council of death: his heart was replete with hatred, and thirsting for revenge. He sought out Giacomo Cenci, without whom, as the eldest son, the females were unwilling to act. Giacomo entered with great readiness into the conspiracy, since he was utterly disgusted with his father, who ill-treated him, and refused to allow him a sufficient support for his wife and children. The apartments of M. Guerra were the place in which the circumstances of the crime about to be committed were concerted and determined upon. Giacomo found a sbirro named Marzio; to whom Guerra added another, Olympio, to carry them into execution. Both these men had moreover inducements to commit the crime; one was urged by love, the other, by hatred; Marzio, in the service of her brother, had frequently seen Beatrice, and became enamoured of her, but with that deep, silent, hopeless, and corroding passion, which wastes the heart; the crime which he thought could recommend him to Beatrice, was undertaken without reserve; as for Olympio, he hated Francesco, because it was through his agency he had lost the situation of Castellan of Rocca Petrella, a castellated fortress, situated in the kingdom of Naples, and belonging to the Prince Colonna. Between these men and the family of the Cenci the following plan was adopted. The period when Francesco usually went to Rocca Petrella was nigh at hand: it was arranged, therefore, that Olympio should obtain the assistance of some Neapolitan bandits, who were to be in waiting in a forest upon his route, and, informed of the moment of his approach, should carry him off with all his family. A heavy ransom should be next demanded, to obtain which the sons should be sent to Rome, but they, pretending not to be able to procure it, should allow the interval fixed upon by the bandits to pass unnoticed, upon which Francesco should be put to death.

In this manner they trusted to avoid all suspicion of conspiracy, and to screen the real assassins. Well arranged however as it might be, the scheme failed. When Francesco departed, the spy sent by the confederates could not discover the retreat of the brigands, and these not being warned, came too late to the place appointed. Francesco entered Rocca Petrella, and the brigands, unwilling to remain longer in a place where they had already spent a week, departed upon a less doubtful and fruitless expedition. In the meanwhile, the more freely to tyrannize over Lucrezia and Beatrice, Francesco dismissed Giacomo and the others to Rome. He then renewed his infamous attempts, until Beatrice resolved herself to accomplish the design she had sought to transfer to other hands.

Olympio and Marzio, having nothing to fear, still lurked in the neighbourhood. One day Beatrice perceived them accidentally from her window, and immediately made a sign that she wished to communicate with them. The same evening Olympio, who, from having been its castellan, knew all the outlets of the fortress, obtained an interview with her, in company with Marzio, at which she gave them letters for the Abbé Guerra and her brother. In these she again asked the approbation of Giacomo, and the payment by the abbé of one thousand piastres to Olympio, being half of the covenanted sum; for, as to Marzio, he acted but for love of Beatrice, to whom he remained devoted as to a madonna, which she observing, presented him with a handsome scarlet mantle, bordered with gold lace, bidding him to wear it for her sake. The remainder of the reward was to be paid when the death of Francesco had made Lucrezia and Beatrice the possessors of his fortune. The sbirri departed, and returned upon the appointed day with the money and the approbation of the priest and Giacomo. The eighth of September was fixed upon for the deed, but Lucrezia, remembering that was the Nativity of the Virgin, desired, with the consent of her daughter-in-law, it should be deferred until the following day.

On that evening, during supper, September 9, 1598, the women dexterously contrived to mix opium with his wine. Francesco did not detect it; and soon, therefore, fell into a deep sleep. Marzio and Olympio had been, in the mean time, concealed in the fortress, and, towards midnight, Beatrice conducted them to the chamber of her father, the door of which she herself opened. They entered, whilst the females awaited the event in the room adjoining. In a few minutes they returned, pale and nerveless, and, by their silence, Beatrice readily perceived the crime was unaccomplished.

"What means this?" she exclaimed. "What is it that prevents you?"

"We feel," replied they, "that it is a base act to slay a poor sleeping old man. Reflecting upon his age, pity overcame us."

She raised her head disdainfully, and, with a deep firm voice, thus indignantly reproached their irresolution.

"And is it thus that men who boast of bravery and strength of mind shrink, and have not the courage to slay a sleeping old man. How would you then dare the deed were he awake? And thus you steal the price of blood! Go then: and since your cowardice nerves my hand, I myself will kill my father; as for you your lives shall not be long secure."

Upon this the sbirri, ashamed of their weakness, made a sign they would despatch him, and re-entered the room, accompanied by the two women. One of them carried two great nails, the other a hammer; he who held the first placed it vertically upon the eye of the sleeping man, the other struck, and the nail was buried in his head. In a similar manner another was driven into his throat, and thus his soul, stained with crimes from which humanity recoils, escaped from his body which writhed in torture on the floor. His daughter, upon this, placed in the hands of his murderers the promised reward, and they departed. Lucrezia and Beatrice now drew the nails from the body, and wrapping it up in a sheet, they dragged it through the rooms, towards a little terrace, from whence they intended to throw it into some waste ground. But their strength was unequal to the task, and Lucrezia perceiving the two sbirri, who were dividing the spoil, recalled them, whereupon they returned and carried the body to the terrace, and threw it down upon an elder tree, in the branches of which it hung. It was found on the following morning still lying amid the broken branches, and, as Beatrice had supposed, the general opinion attributed his death to a fall from a part of the terrace, whither he had gone in the night, and where there was no parapet. The consequence was, that owing to the disfigured state of the body, no attention was paid to the wounds made by the nails. Lucrezia and Beatrice, upon hearing of the accident, immediately quitted their rooms, crying and bewailing the event, with a semblance of grief so natural and unaffected, that it would effectually have dissipated the most careless suspicion as to its cause. Nor did any, the slightest even, seem to be awakened, except in the mind of the washerwoman of the castle, to whom Beatrice, in giving her the sheet in which they had dragged the body, assigned a frivolous excuse for the blood with which it was stained. She believed it, appeared to do so, and was at least silent upon the subject at the time; and the funeral over, Lucrezia and Beatrice returned without delay to Rome.

Whilst they resided here, fearless of inquiry, but not probably free from remorse, retribution had commenced its course. The court of Naples had heard of the sudden and unexpected death of Francesco; and being doubtful as to its cause, despatched a royal commissioner to Petrella, to disinter the body, and trace (if any existed) the marks of assassination. Upon his arrival all the domestics of the castle were arrested and sent in chains to Naples. But no evidence beyond that of the washerwoman was obtained: who deposed that Beatrice had given her a sheet to wash which was stained with blood. But this was a fearful clue; for, being questioned as to whether she really thought this was sufficiently accounted for by the cause Beatrice had assigned, she replied no, and gave reasons for such an opinion. This deposition was sent to the court of Rome, where it was not considered as sufficient to justify the arrest of the Cenci. Time passed away, and the youngest of the family died, so that of the five sons of Francesco, Giacomo and Bernardo alone remained. In the mean time the Abbé Guerra received information that orders had been given to arrest both Marzio and Olympio. He was a man of the most wary and circumspect disposition, whom it was difficult to surprise when once put upon his guard. He obtained the aid of two more sbirri, who engaged to assassinate the former: Olympio was thereupon killed at Terni, but Marzio was already arrested by the court of Naples. He was tortured and confessed all. His deposition was forwarded to Rome, whither he was soon afterwards sent, to be confronted with the accused.

Giacomo, Bernardo, Lucrezia, and Beatrice were now arrested and confined at first in their father's palace, but as proof arose against them, they were transferred to the castle of Corte Savella, where they were examined in the presence of Marzio, but they denied not only any participation in the crime, but all knowledge of the assassin. Beatrice in particular demanded to be first confronted with the witness, and then denounced with so much calmness and dignity the falsehood of his evidence, that he, feeling her to be more dear to him than ever, resolved, if he could not live for her, at least to save her by his death. He thereupon recanted, asserted that what he had before stated was untrue, for which he besought pardon of God and Beatrice. Neither threats nor tortures were henceforth available; and he died resolute in his denial, under the most frightful tortures.

The Cenci believed themselves saved; but justice still pursued them. The sbirro who had assassinated his coadjutors was arrested for another crime, and amid his general confession of guilt, included that of having executed the commands of Mons. Guerra, on account of some anxiety caused by the existence of Olympio. Fortunately for the abbé he received prompt intimation of the evidence given against him, and instead of allowing himself to be intimidated or disconcerted as another might have done; he availed himself of the accidental presence of a charcoal dealer, who was supplying his house at the moment he received the news; and bribing him first to the strictest silence, and secondly, purchasing his dirty garments at almost their weight in gold, he next cut off his hair, stained his beard, smeared his face, bought two asses laden with charcoal, and in this manner passed through the streets, with his mouth full of black bread and onions, imitating at times the cry and manner of the dealers. And thus whilst the police sought for him in every direction, he escaped from the city, joined a troop of condottieri and reached Naples, whence he embarked, and according to some, yet very doubtful opinions, enlisted and served in a Swiss company, in the pay of Henry IV. of France.

The confession of the sbirro and the flight of Guerra left no further doubt as to the guilt of the Cenci. They were therefore taken to prison, the two brothers were submitted to the torture, and, unable to endure its pains, at once acknowledged their guilt; and Lucrezia Petroni was not able to resist the torture of the cord, and in a similar manner avowed all she knew. Beatrice was alone unmoved; neither promise, nor menace, nor torture, were of any use: she bore all with an indomitable courage; insomuch that, celebrated as the judge Ulysseo Moscati was in the conduct of such affairs, he was foiled, and unable to wring one word from her to which she was unwilling to give utterance. He referred the case again to Clement VIII., who fearing that, affected by her beauty, Moscati had spared the torture, withdrew the cause from him and placed it in the hands of another, whose inflexible sternness and indifference to human suffering was well known. He recommenced the proceedings, and being informed that Beatrice had been submitted to the ordinary torture only, desired her to be subjected to its extraordinary application, that of the cord and pulley, the most fearful of all those the hellish ingenuity of man has ever invented.

There were at this period four kinds of torture in use at Rome, that of the whistle, fire, total deprivation of sleep, and the cord and pulleys. The first, applied in general to children and the aged, consisted in thrusting beneath the quick of the nail, reeds cut in the shape of whistles. The second, in exposing the feet to a great fire, the soles being first well greased with lard, until they became perfectly fried.

The torture of deprivation of sleep was invented by Marsilius, and consisted in making the sufferer sit in a frame of wood about five feet high, and angular. He was naked, with his arms bound to the machine behind him, two men were seated by his side, who were relieved every fifth hour, and awoke him the moment they observed the slightest desire to sleep. Marsilius has asserted that no one was ever known to endure this torture, but Marsilius is too boastful. Farinacci admits that out of a hundred who endured it, five only persisted either in denial or in refusal to confess; an admission sufficiently flattering to the genius of its inventor.

The torture by cord and pulley admitted of three degrees of intensity. The first was merely the fear excited by its horrible preparation, and the slight compression of the wrists. The second degree was when the victim was undressed, his wrists tightly bound behind his back, from whence the rope was passed around a pulley in the vaulted roof, and thence fixed to a windlass, by means of which the body suspended could be raised or lowered at will; gradually, or by a sudden jerk, as the judge deemed fit. This lasted generally during the recitation of a Pater Noster, an Ave Maria, or Miserere, but if ineffectual, the time was greatly extended. The last degree was conducted as the preceding, only that after suspension for different intervals of time, varying from a quarter to three quarters of an hour, in Spain to an hour and a quarter, the prisoner was either moved to and fro, like the pendulum of a clock, or suffered to fall from the full elevation of the rope to within two feet of the floor. If he resisted this, which was almost unheard of, his feet were manacled, and to these also weights were attached, by which means the inexpressible pain of the torture was doubled.

As after her re-examination Beatrice, notwithstanding the avowals of her brothers and step-mother, still persisted in her denial, she was raised in the manner described about two feet from the floor by the pulley, and thus kept during the time occupied by the recital of a Paternoster. Being again questioned, she made no answer, except "You kill me; you kill me." whereupon she was raised still higher, and they commenced the Ave Maria until she fainted. Upon recovery the rope was turned again, and the Miserere was now said; during which she gave utterance only to exclamations of pain. She was now elevated to the height of ten feet from the ground, and the judge again questioned her; but whether she was speechless or unwilling to confess, she made a sign only with her head, either that she could or would not speak. "Perceiving this," continues the official detail, "we made a sign to the executioner to loose the rope, so that she fell by a sudden jerk, with the full weight of her body, from an elevation of ten to two feet, by the force of which her arms were wrenched quite round, whereupon she uttered a loud cry, and swooned. She was again restored and exclaimed, 'Infamous assassins, you slay me; but if you even tear my arms from my body, I will make no other answer.' Wherefore we ordered her feet to be manacled, and a weight of fifty pounds to be attached to them. But at this moment the door was opened, and several voices cried, 'Enough, enough; oh! do not torture her again.' This proceeded from Giacomo, Bernardo, and Lucrezia Petroni, who seeing Beatrice suspended, her arms dislocated, and covered with the blood which flowed from her wrists, advanced into the torture chamber and said,

"'We are guilty, and now penitence can alone save our souls, or enable us with courage to endure death; do not suffer them thus cruelly to torture you, by an obstinate refusal to confess.'

"To which she answered, 'Do you seek death then; you are wrong to do so; but if you wish to die, so let it be.' Then turning to the executioner, 'Untie me,' she added, 'and read to me the questions you would put. That which I ought to confess I will confess, and that which I ought to deny, I will deny.'

Beatrice was thereupon unbound, the barber dressed her arms in the ordinary manner, and, as she had promised, she made a full confession.

The pope was so excited upon reading the details of the crime, that he commanded the culprits to be drawn by wild horses through the streets of Rome; but a sentence so terrible awakened opposition from its revolting nature; so that many of the highest rank proceeded to the Vatican, and besought his Holiness to revoke the decree, or at least to permit the condemned to be heard in their defence. "And they," replied Clement VIII., "did they afford their unhappy father an opportunity to make his, when they mercilessly and disgracefully slew him?" At last, influenced by their solicitations, he granted them a respite of three days. The best and greatest of the advocates at Rome immediately availed themselves of the delay, and numerous memorials were drawn up, to support which they appeared before the pope upon the day appointed. The first who spoke was Nicolas de Angelio, which he did with so much eloquence, that the pope, afraid of its effect, interrupted his discourse, angrily exclaiming, "What, not only among the nobility men are found willing to commit parricide, but among the advocates eloquence to defend the crime! This we never should have believed; this it was impossible for us to have conceived."

All were silent upon this except the advocate Farinacci, who, imboldened by the office that he held, firmly but respectfully replied,

"We do not appear before you, most holy father, to defend the guilty, but to plead the cause of the innocent, for should we prove, that some of the accused have acted from the right of self-defence, we trust, they may deserve your mercy; for even as there are admitted cases, in which the father may put his child to death, so also there are others, in which the child is justified even unto the slaying his father; we will speak therefore upon this point, when your holiness will deign to hear us."

Clement VIII. was now as calm as he before had been excited, and he listened to his pleading with great attention, the principal argument of which rested upon the crime of Francesco, and the violence offered to his daughter. He cited as a proof of this, the memoir forwarded by Beatrice to his holiness, in which she besought him, as her sister had before done, to withdraw her from her father's house, and place her in a convent; this had, however, unfortunately disappeared, and notwithstanding the strictest search, no trace could be found of its receipt. The pope, taking all the papers connected with the subject, dismissed the advocates, who immediately retired, excepting Altieri, who threw himself at his feet, and said,

"I could not do otherwise than appear before you, most holy father, in this case, being the advocate of the poor, for which I humbly entreat your forgiveness."

The pope upon this raised him with kindness, and said,

"We are not surprised at the part that you, but at that which others have taken, who protect and defend these criminals."

And as he felt a great interest in the cause, he spent the whole night in studying it, with the Cardinal di San Marcello, a man of great experience and ability. This done, he communicated his view of the general argument to the advocates, who derived from it strong hopes of the final pardon of the accused; for it was clearly proved, that if the children were guilty of parricide, at least, and this more particularly in the case of Beatrice, they had been urged to its commission by the brutal lust, the tyranny, and cruelty of their father. The pope seemed to feel the influence of the arguments adduced; he relaxed the proceedings against the Cenci, and permitted them to hope for life. Rome breathed more freely, and seemed joyous as though this act of clemency was a public good; but alas! the intentions of the pope were changed by the news of the murder of the Marquis of Santa Croce, at the age of sixty years, by the hands of his son Paul, who had cruelly killed him, by fifteen strokes of his dagger, because he refused to make him the sole heir to his estates.

Clement VIII. was horror-struck at this repetition of a crime so dreadful, but he was obliged to proceed to Monte Cavallo, where, upon the following morning, he was to consecrate the Cardinal Diveristiana, appointed by him the titular Bishop of Olumbre, in the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli; but upon the 10th of September, 1599, at eight o'clock in the morning, he summoned before him, M. Ferrante Taverna, governor of Rome, and said to him:

"I give into your hands the Cenci cause, that you may, as soon as you can, execute the justice allotted to them."

As soon as the governor arrived at his palace, he communicated the sentence, and held a council with all the criminal judges of the city, at which the Cenci were condemned to death. His decision was soon known ; and as the interest felt in this unhappy family had continually increased, many cardinals earnestly supplicated, that they, or at least Lucrezia and Beatrice, might be privately executed, and mercy extended to Bernardo, then only fifteen years of age, and who was perfectly guiltless of the slightest participation in the crime. Cardinal Sforza, who was the most urgent, solicited but in vain; the pope would not encourage the slightest hope of mitigation; nor was it until Farinacci suggested a scruple of conscience, and at the last hour, that upon repeated entreaty, he consented to remit the sentence in behalf of Bernardo.

At break of day the members of the brotherhood of the Conforteria assembled at the two prisons of Corte Savella and of Tordinona, but it was not until five o'clock that the registrar of the courts of justice read their sentence to Beatrice and Lucrezia Petroni. Both slept in the hope of the enjoyment of life ; the registrar awoke them, to notify, that condemned by man, they must now prepare to meet their God. Beatrice seemed at first to be completely paralyzed: she could not speak ; was regardless of all around ; and pale and trembling, arose from her bed as one deprived of sense, and all power of self-guidance, till at last her grief burst forth in frightful cries.

Lucrezia received the intelligence with greater firmness, and dressed herself to proceed immediately to the chapel, exhorting, in the meanwhile, Beatrice to endure her fate with resignation ; but she, as if deprived of reason, ran wildly about her prison, raising her arms in agony towards heaven, or striking in despair her head against the walls, exclaiming—

" To die! to die thus, unprepared, upon a scaffold—by the hangman!"

After a terrible paroxysm, her physical strength becoming exhausted, her mind regained its force, and from that moment she was an example of humility, and of patient, enduring resolution. She desired permission to make her will, requested her body might be interred in the church of San Pietro in Montorio, left five hundred crowns to the religious order of the Stigmata, and willed that her dowery, now amounting to fifteen thousand crowns, might be bestowed in marriage on fifty poor girls. For the place of her interment, she selected the foot of the high altar, adorned by Rafaelle's picture of the Transfiguration, which had been so great an object of interest to her in life. Lucrezia followed her example, bequeathed many charitable legacies, and left her body to be buried in the church of San Georgio del Velobre upon the Celian hill, with thirty-two thousand crowns for charitable uses and other pious legacies. This done, they passed some time reciting psalms and litanies, and other prayers.

At eight o'clock they confessed, heard mass, and received the holy communion. Beatrice, not considering that it would be decorous to appear on the scaffold in their splendid dresses, ordered two, one for herself and another for the Signora Lucrezia, made in the manner of the nuns, gathered up at the neck, with long sleeves of black cotton for her mother-in-law, and of common silk for herself. She had also a little turban as her head dress. These were brought to them, with cords for their girdles, and were placed by them, whilst they continued in prayer.

The moment appointed now drew nigh, and Beatrice, who was still kneeling, rose with a countenance, calm, and almost happy; and, turning to Lucrezia, said,

"Mother, the hour of our suffering is drawing near; I think it is now time for us to prepare for it; let us dress, therefore, in these clothes, and let us aid each other in this last office, as we have been accustomed to do."

They did so; the ropes were tied around their waists as girdles, and Beatrice, placing her turban upon her head, awaited the last summons.

In the mean time, their sentence had been also read to Giacomo and Bernardo, who were now similarly awaiting their doom.

Towards ten o'clock the Company of Mercy arrived at the prison del Tordinona, and stopped upon the threshold with the sacred crucifix, expecting the approach of the unhappy youths. Here a dangerous accident had nearly happened. As many spectators were at the windows of the prison to see the prisoners led forth, some one inadvertently threw down a flower-pot which was outside one of them, which fell into the street, and narrowly missed one of the brothers of the order, who walked before the crucifix with a lighted torch, the flame of which it passed so near, that it extinguished it by the force of its descent. The doors opened; Giacomo appeared, and knelt immediately in devout adoration of the holy symbol of salvation. He was dressed in a long mantle of black, with his breast entirely bare; for during the procession to the scaffold, his flesh was to be torn by red-hot pincers, which the executioner had in a chafing dish, fixed upon the cart. Bernardo was now led forth, but at the moment he crossed the threshold of the prison, the fiscal of Rome addressed him in a loud voice—

"Signor Bernardo Cenci,—In the name of our Redeemer, our holy father the pope extends unto you the mercy of life; satisfied by commanding you to accompany your relations to the scaffold and to death, and enjoining you not to forget to pray for those with whom you were to die."

The executioner now took off his handcuffs, and the bandage from his eyes; for owing to his extreme youth, they thought to spare him the sight of the scaffold, and placed him in the cart beside his brother, wrapping around him at the same time a magnificent cloak, which, upon inquiry, was found to be the same, given by Beatrice to Marzio, to decide him upon the murder of her father. The procession now advanced to the prison of Corte Savilla, upon reaching which, the sacred crucifix was similarly stopped to await the approach of the female prisoners. They were immediately led forth, and, kneeling upon the threshold, worshipped, as their brothers had done, the holy sign of their common faith. Beatrice and Lucrezia advanced on foot one behind the other, after the last row of the penitents, both having their heads covered to their waists, with this difference, that Lucrezia as a widow wore a black veil, which covered her as far as her girdle, slippers of the same colour, with high heels, and bows of ribbons, as was then the custom; whilst Beatrice wore a cap of silk similar to the soubreverte, or upper garment without sleeves, with a veil embroidered in silver, which fell upon the shoulders, and covered her satin gown; white slippers with high heels, decorated with knots of ribbons, and cherry-coloured fringe. The hands of both were but slightly tied, so that each could carry a crucifix and a handkerchief. It was thus they advanced towards the bridge of St. Angelo, where the scaffold had been erected. Lucrezia wept bitterly, but Beatrice was calm, resigned, and firm. Upon reaching the bridge, they were, together with their brothers, brought into a chapel adjoining, where, for a few moments, they were reunited. Giacomo and Bernardo were then led forth, although Bernardo was pardoned, and the other was not to be executed until the last. Upon reaching the platform, Bernardo fainted for the second time; and, as the executioner went towards him to assist in his recovery, some of the spectators, who feared it was to put him to death, called out, "He is pardoned!" The hangman, however, reassured them by placing Bernardo near the block, whilst Giacomo knelt upon the other side. Lucrezia, the first to suffer, was conducted by the executioner to the foot of the scaffold; her hands were then tied behind, her breast and neck uncovered, and upon reaching the platform, the veil was taken from her face. The shame of being thus exposed to the gaze of the crowd overcame her, and she shuddered in a manner that thrilled the hearts of the spectators; then in tears, and with a voice excited by despair, she exclaimed,—

"Oh! my God, have mercy upon me! and do you, my brothers, here seated, pray in pity for my soul."

She now turned to the executioner and inquired what remained for her to do; whereupon he placed her upon the plank of the guillotine, and adjusting her head with much difficulty to the block, owing to her stoutness, the spring was touched, the knife descended and the head rolled upon the scaffold, to the great horror of the multitude to whom the executioner showed it, and then wrapping it up in black silk, placed it with the body in a coffin at the foot of the scaffold. Whilst the scaffold was being arranged for Beatrice, some steps covered with spectators broke down, and many were killed, and more lamed and hurt by this accident. The machine was now rearranged, the blood washed off, and the executioner returned to the chapel to fetch Beatrice. Upon seeing him approach with the cords to tie her hands, she exclaimed, "God grant that you bind this body unto corruption, but free my spirit unto eternal life." She then arose and quitted the chapel, leaving her slippers at the foot of the scaffold, quickly ascended the ladder, and as she had already been instructed what to do, she stretched herself upon the plank, adjusting her head as quickly as possible upon the block. But notwithstanding the care she had taken to avoid the agony of delay, she was obliged to endure it, for aware of her impetuous character, and fearful that it might betray her into some act of guilt between the interval even of absolution and death, the pope had ordered that upon Beatrice's appearance upon the scaffold, a cannon should be fired, which was done to the great wonder of the people and of the culprit, who raised her head from the block, until Clement, who was in prayer at Monte Cavallo, gave her plenary absolution in Articulo Mortis. Then after an interval of five minutes, during which she awaited the stroke with her head upon the block, the executioner touched the spring, and the knife fell.

Hereupon a terrible sight ensued, for whilst the head rolled on one side, the body rose up upon the other, falling forward again with violence upon the guillotine. The executioner next held up the head to the crowd, and then gave the body to the brotherhood of mercy, one of whom attempting to place it in the coffin, it slipped from his hands, and fell from the platform, shedding a great deal of blood to the ground, upon which Bernardo fainted, and was recovered with the greatest difficulty to endure the execution of his eldest brother.

Giacomo was now to die: he had witnessed the death of his stepmother and of his sister, his clothes were covered with their blood, when the hangman approached him, and, throwing aside his mantle, exhibited his breast, streaming with blood from the wounds inflicted by the burning pincers. In this state, he walked firmly towards his brother, whom he thus addressed:

"Bernardo, if, during my examination, I accused and compromised you, it was basely done, and, although I have already abjured that declaration, yet here, at the moment of appearing before my Creator, I solemnly attest your innocence, and declare it to be an atrocious act of power which has condemned you to witness this most fearful sight."

Upon this the executioner made him kneel, bound his legs to a transverse beam upon the scaffold, bandaged his eyes, and then dashed out his brains with a blow from a leaden hammer, and immediately quartered him before the eyes of the people. The butchery over, the crowd retired; and Bernardo, attacked by a burning fever, was bled and put to bed. The bodies of Lucrezia and Beatrice were laid in their coffins and placed before the statue of St. Paul, at the foot of the bridge, with four torches of white wax before them; in which state they remained until four o'clock in the afternoon, when they were carried to the church of "San Giovanni Decollato." At nine in the evening, the body of Beatrice, decorated with flowers, and dressed in the clothes she had worn when executed, was borne to the church of San Pietro in Montorio, where, with fifty lighted torches, followed also by the brethren of the order of the Stigmata and all the Franciscans of Rome, it was buried at the foot of the high altar, according to her request. The same evening Lucrezia was buried in the church of San Georgio del Velobre. A few days afterwards, Bernardo Cenci was freed from confinement, but condemned to pay, in the course of the year, two thousand five hundred Roman crowns to the hospital of the Most Holy Trinity of Pilgrims.

And now, gentle reader, if, after you have seen the tomb, you desire to obtain a more accurate idea of the face and form of her who therein reposes, you should visit the Barberini Gallery, where, amid five other chefs-d'œuvres, you will see the portrait of Beatrice, painted by Guido, either the night preceding her death, or during her procession to the scaffold. It is a beautiful head, ornamented by a turban, to which a rich velvet drapery is attached; the hair of glossy chestnut colour; dark eyes, within which the tear seems yet to tremble; a nose well-formed, and mouth almost infantine; a complexion remarkably fair; the age apparently about twenty-two. Close by this hangs the portrait of Lucrezia, the very type of the Roman matron, in all her pride of beauty. The rich complexion, well-defined features, straight nose, dark eyebrows, and expression at once commanding and tenderly voluptuous. A smile seems yet to linger on her lips, and her hair, parted in rich curls upon her forehead, and falling luxuriantly around her face, seems its natural and becoming frame. Of Giacomo and Bernardo no portraits exist. They are described: the former as of middle size, fair but ruddy, and with black eyebrows, affable in his nature, of good address, and well skilled in every science, and in all knightly exercises. He was not more than twenty-three when he died. Lastly, Bernardo so closely resembled Beatrice in complexion, features, and every thing else, that when he first appeared upon the scaffold, with his long hair and feminine figure, many at first thought that it was Beatrice; his age, at her death, has been stated at twenty-six years of age, but he appeared not more than fourteen. He remained in the prison of Terdinona for some time after the execution of his family, and, upon his release, became heir to all their possessions. He married and had a son named Christofero.

Peace be with their remains!

THE MARCHIONESS DE GANGES.

It was towards the close of the year 1657, when a very plain carriage, and without any armorial bearings, stopped at a late hour in the evening, before a house in the Rue Hautefeuille, where two others stood already in waiting. The servant had his hand upon the door, which he was about to open, when he was stopped by a mild, although rather tremulous voice intimating a doubt as to the place. A window was immediately let down, and a head appeared so completely enveloped in a black satin hood, that no one feature was visible; and after a close observation of the front of the house, as if expecting to discover some sign, the fair incognita seemed satisfied, for she turned to her companion, and said, "It is quite right; there is the name." The door was now opened, the two ladies got out, and after again looking at a small board nailed beneath the windows of the second floor, upon which was printed, "Madame Voisin, Midwife," glided rapidly up a little court, the door into which was but partly closed, and which was only lighted sufficiently to show the narrow winding staircase which led from it to the apartments above. The unknown visiters, however, one of whom seemed to be of superior rank, did not stop upon the floor to which the board appeared to guide them, but as if familiar with the place, continued their ascent still higher. Upon reaching the landing-place of the third story, they were stopped by a dwarfish-looking figure, strangely dressed, after the mode of the Venetian buffoons of the sixteenth century, who extended a wand as they approached him, and demanded at the same time what was the object of their visit.

"To consult the Spirit," replied the visitant, in the same mild and gentle tones.

"Enter then and wait," answered the dwarf, drawing aside a tapestry hanging, and ushering the two ladies into an anteroom.

They remained there for about half an hour, hearing nothing, seeing nothing; till suddenly a door in the tapestry was opened, and upon a voice in the distance giving order for their admission, the ladies were instantly conducted into another room hung with black, and lighted only by a single lamp suspended from the ceiling. The door closed upon them as they entered and stood in the presence of the sibyl.

This was a woman of about twenty-six years of age, who, contrary to the usual custom of the fair sex, evinced an inclination to appear elderly. She was dressed in black, her hair arranged and hanging in plait, after the manner of the Egyptian statues; her neck, arms, and feet, were bare; the girdle around her waist was fastened by a large garnet, which cast a lurid glare; and she had a divining rod in her hand. She was seated upon a kind of platform representing the ancient tripod, from whence a subtle pungent incense was diffused. Her features, though vulgar, were tolerably handsome; and her eyes, doubtless owing to some mystery of the toilet, seemed of an extraordinary size, and, like the garnet, to shine with a strange unearthly light.

As they entered they observed the sibyl, her head resting upon her hand, as one absorbed in thought; and fearing to disturb her ecstatic revery, they waited in silence her recovery from this abstraction. After an interval of ten minutes she raised her head, and seemingly aware for the first time of the presence of her two visiters, she exclaimed,—

"What desire they of me again? Shall I never enjoy repose but in the tomb?"

"Forgive me," answered the applicant, "but I sought to know——"

"Silence," replied the sibyl, in a solemn voice; "I seek no knowledge of your affairs; you must address the Spirit, who is a jealous spirit, forbidding all intimacy with his mysteries; for myself, I can but pray for you, and obey him."

At these words she descended from her tripod and entered an adjoining room, from whence she soon returned, apparently more pale and agitated than before, holding in one hand a chafing dish, and in the other a red paper. The lamp was at the same time gradually dimmed; so that, discernible only by the glare from the brazier, every object assumed a fantastic form, as it seemed half emerging from the gloom, to the no small terror of the two strangers, who felt, however, it was now too late to recede. The enchantress placed the burning chafing-dish in the middle of the room, then presenting the red paper to the lady who had addressed her, she said,

"Write here what you desire to have foretold."

It was received with more firmness than might have been expected; the incognita placed herself at the table, and wrote:

"Am I young? am I handsome? am I a maid, wife, or widow? Thus much for the past. Ought I to marry? should I re-marry? shall I enjoy a long life, or meet with an early death? Thus much for the future." Then extending her hand towards the sibyl, she inquired where she was to place the paper.

"Roll it round this ball," she replied, giving her, at the same time, a small one of white wax; "both will be consumed in these flames before your eyes. The Spirit already knows the secrets of your destiny; within three days expect his reply."

The incognita obeyed, and the ball was thrown into the flames.

"All that is requisite is now fulfilled," said the sibyl. "Comus!" Hereupon the dwarf entered. "Conduct the lady to her carriage."

The lady laid a purse upon the table, and, followed by her companion, who was a confidential servant, quitted the house by a private staircase, leading to another entrance, where the carriage waited them, and bore them rapidly away in the direction of the Rue Dauphine. Three days after, the fair incognita found, upon awaking, on her dressing-table, a letter in an unknown hand, which was thus addressed: To the fair Provençale; and expressed in these words:

"You are beautiful, you are young, you are a widow,—thus much for the present. You will remarry, you will die young, and meet with a violent death,—thus much for the future—THE SPIRIT."

The paper was similar to that upon which the inquiry had been written. A tremour came over the reader of this mysterious epistle; for the answer, as concerned the past, was so true, that it confirmed the dread of a similar correctness with respect to the future. In fact, the fair unknown visitant of the sibyl, was no other than the beautiful Marie de Rossan, called before her marriage, Mademoiselle de Chateaublanc, the name of one of the estates of her wealthy maternal grandfather Joannis de Nochères. At thirteen years of age she was married to the Marquis de Castellane, a nobleman of high rank, who traced his descent from John of Castile, son of Peter the Cruel, and Joanna de Castro, his mistress.

Proud of the charms of his youthful bride, the marquis, who was commandant of the king's galleys, hastened to present her at the court of Louis XIV., who, struck by her enchanting appearance, had danced with her twice during the same evening, to the great despair of the most eminent beauties of the day; and, moreover, to crown her reputation, Christina of Sweden, then residing at the court, had declared, that in all the kingdoms she had visited, she had never seen the rival of "the fairr Povençale." This praise had produced such an effect, that henceforth even the terms of its expression became the only designation of the Marchioness de Castellane. The favour of Louis XIV., and the commendation of Christina, produced the natural consequences. The marchioness was quite the rage, and Mignard, but just ennobled and appointed painter to the king, added still more to his celebrity, by obtaining permission to paint her portrait, which still exists; but, as the reader may desire to possess some idea of the aspect of the heroine of this tale, and may not have seen the portrait of the artist, we shall extract one from the description given in 1667, by the author of a little work entitled, "The authentic narrative of the principal circumstances connected with the lamentable death of the Marchioness de Ganges," upon which, and the "Recital of the death of the Marchioness de Ganges," published at Paris in 1667, by Jacques Legental, this narrative is founded.

Her complexion was strikingly fair, yet relieved by a ruddy tint, which, far from predominating, seemed to blend with it, in a manner art could not have reached by the most delicate gradations of its colours. The effect of this was increased by the rich, jet-black hair which fell luxuriantly around a forehead of the most exquisite proportions. Her eyes were large and dark, chastened in their expression, yet still so piercing as to forbid a fixed look upon them; her teeth were the befitting ornaments to a mouth which, from its size, form, and delicately-shaped outline, was unequalled; the nose well defined and regular, giving to her face an air of dignity, which commanded and blended respect with admiration. In every feature there was the hue and freshness of health; grace was in all her looks, in every movement of her lips, and the slightest gesture of her head; her figure corresponded with the rest, and her step and carriage were becoming the charms of one whom nature had so prodigally endowed. It may be readily supposed, that amid the court of Louis XIV. she could not escape the calumnies of jealous rivals, but these were always pointless, so becoming, even in the absence of her husband, was the conduct of the marchioness. Her conversation, in general restrained, and at all times more sound than brilliant, offered a decided contrast to the frivolous and fantastical discourse of the *beaux esprits* of the period; so that many who paid their court to her without success, unwilling to believe rejection arose from any deficiency of attractive qualities on their part, industriously whispered that the marchioness was nothing but a beautiful statue. But it was to no purpose that such things were said and repeated in the marchioness's absence: the moment she entered a room, that instant the charm of her eyes and smile, and the irresistible influence of words well chosen, tersely and elegantly expressed, overcame even the most predisposed against her, and all were forced, even reluctantly, to confess that they had never seen any creature approach so near to perfection. Thus, in the full enjoyment of a celebrity scandal could not diminish, nor slander vilify, her days went by, when she heard of the shipwreck and loss of her husband, with the fleet he commanded. The marchioness behaved upon this, as upon every former occasion, with the utmost piety and discretion, and although she could not, by reason of his long absence, or the circumstances of their early union, feel acutely for his loss, she not only retired from the court to the house of Madame d'Ampus, her mother-in-law, but withdrew entirely from society, during the time prescribed.

Six months after her husband's death, the marchioness accepted an invitation to finish the period of her mourning with her grandfather, M. Joannis de Nochères, and proceeded for this purpose to Avignon. A few days before her departure she visited la Voisin, who, although far from enjoying the reputation she subsequently obtained, had greatly excited her curiosity, by the various recitals she had heard, of the truth and fulfilment of her predictions. The reader is aware of the answer returned to her consultation of the sibyl. The marchioness was not superstitious, but nevertheless a prediction so fearful, so blended with truth, produced a deep impression upon her mind, which neither the pleasure of revisiting her native place, the kindness of her relation, nor the pleasures of society, could effectually dissipate; she sought therefore and obtained the permission of M. de Nochères to spend the remainder of her mourning in a cloister.

It was here, and with all the enthusiasm of the poor recluses of the convent, that she for the first time heard of the Marquis de Ganges, whose reputation for personal beauty was as great as her own. This was so much the topic of discourse, it was so constantly impressed upon her that nature seemed to have created them for each other, that her curiosity was excited. The marquis, on his part, owing doubtless to similar suggestion, had conceived an earnest desire of being introduced to the Marchioness de Castellane, and, availing himself of the kindness of M. de Nochères, arrived at the convent, and visited its beautiful recluse. She recognised him at first sight, for never hitherto having met with so handsome a cavalier, it was impossible but that he who now stood before her was the Marquis de Ganges, the subject of so much animated conversation in the convent parlour. The natural result followed; the marchioness and the marquis met, and became attached; they were both young, the marquis of noble rank, and holding a high situation; the marchioness was rich; the uniont herefore was in every respect suitable, and was delayed only until the time of mourning expired; and the marriage was finally celebrated towards the beginning of the year 1558.

The marquis was twenty, and the marchioness twenty-two. They were for a time perfectly happy; the marchioness forgot the prediction, or thought of it only to feel surprise at the influence it had exerted upon her mind. But happiness of this description finds not its dwelling-place in this world: it is at best a vision ever fleeting, always insecure. It was the marquis to whom it first became insipid. Two children, a son and daughter, had tended to cement their union; yet prompted by the excitement of his former pleasures, he neglected the society of the marchioness, to rejoin that of his early friends; and the marchioness re-entered the brilliant society which she had quitted for the enjoyments of home, and where a fresh succession of triumphs awaited her. This excited the jealousy of the marquis, who, too much a man of the world to incur the ridicule attending its display, concealed the passion within his heart, from whence it again issued, in the form of sneers, sarcasms, or slighting neglect. This continued until the marquis, under various pretexts, lived almost entirely separated from his wife. Notwithstanding this treatment, her conduct was uniformly patient, enduring, and discreet; and it would be difficult to find, upon any other woman, so pre-eminently attractive, a similar unanimity of opinion.

They were thus situated, when the marquis, to whom even the occasional society of his wife had become insupportable, invited his two brothers, the Chevalier and the Abbé de Ganges, to reside with him.

The abbé, who bore this title without belonging to the church, was a kind of *bel-esprit*, a ready composer of madrigals and fugitive pieces; and handsome, although in moments of irritation, his eyes became singularly expressive of ferocity; otherwise a libertine in the widest sense of the word, and as unabashed and shameless, as if he had been really one of the profligate clergy of that period. The chevalier, who participated in the personal advantages so profusely bestowed upon his family, was one of those men who journey on from youth to age, indifferent alike to good and evil, unless their tendencies are directed by some mind more powerful than their own.

This was the position of the chevalier with respect to his brother; obeying an influence unknown, and against which he would have revolted, like a self-willed child, had he even possessed the capability of indulging such a suspicion. He was but a machine regulated by the will of another mind, the tool of the bad passions of another heart, the more dangerous, as being unrestrained by the slightest ray of reason, or of instinct, to counteract the impulse which governed his career. To a limited degree, the abbé possessed a similar power over the marquis; a younger brother, consequently portionless, and, although wearing the costume of the church, without a benefice, he contrived to persuade the marquis, wealthy not only by his own inheritance, but by the property of his wife, that it was requisite for the good management of his estates, to appoint a confidential agent, which office he himself proposed to fill.

The marquis, weary of his domestic solitude, and averse to business, willingly accepted his proposal, and the abbé arrived, bringing with him the chevalier, who followed him as his shadow, and to whom generally no more attention was paid than to a mere cipher.

The marchioness often said afterwards, that upon their very first introduction, although their manners and appearance were unexceptionable, she had felt a presentiment of evil; and that the prediction of the sibyl, so long forgotten, flashed upon her mind like a gleam of lightning.

But the effect was different with the brothers: the beauty of the marchioness had attracted the attention of both, though in a dissimilar manner. The chevalier gazed in ecstasy upon her, as he would have considered a beautiful statue: it was admiration unimpassioned, and, if left to himself, perfectly harmless. The abbé, on the contrary, was impressed by a determined and violent desire to possess this, the most beautiful woman he had ever seen; but, a perfect master of his feelings, he gave expression merely to those familiar phrases of gallantry, which are understood to mean nothing, both by those who utter and by those who hear them; nevertheless, before the close of this first interview, the abbé had decided, with the firmness of his irrevocable will, that the marchioness should be his. For herself, the marchioness, owing to the entertaining versatility of the abbé, and the extreme inanity of the chevalier, gradually laid aside the reserve she had at first felt; and the more so, as their presence brought back in some degree the former gaiety of the chateau. But her happiness was greatly increased, when the marquis, so long indifferent to her charms, seemed again to feel she was too beautiful to be neglected. The marchioness had never ceased to love; she had endured the estrangement of his affections with resignation; she welcomed its return with joy, and three months passed away, in a manner the more endearing, by contrast with the later, and the memory of their former mode of life. She abandoned herself, therefore, to her new hopes, with all that unsuspecting confidence to which youth that seeks but to be happy is so prone, careless of all to come, and not even curious to discover the ministering spirit who had restored to her the treasure she had lost. Whilst thus hopeful and unsuspicious, she received an invitation from a lady in their neighbourhood to pass a few days at her house. Her husband and brothers-in-law were similarly invited, and a great hunting-party was to ensue, for which every one immediately commenced the most active preparations. The abbé, whose manners made him welcome to all parties of pleasure, declared himself for that day the attendant cavalier of the marchioness, a choice which she confirmed with her accustomed condescension; his example was followed by the rest of the company, and they proceeded to the place appointed. It happened then, as it invariably does, the dogs had the benefit of the run; two or three amateurs kept up with them and the rest straggled in all directions. The abbé, as squire to the marchioness, had never quitted her for a moment, and by his customary adroitness had obtained the opportunity for a *tête-à-tête*, which his companion had long very carefully avoided. The moment the marchioness perceived his intention of avoiding the chace, she endeavoured to frustrate it, by riding in an opposite direction to the one she had first taken, but the abbé laid his hand upon her bridle. The marchioness could not and would not give occasion for a quarrel; she contented herself therefore with waiting his explanation, assuming, at the same time, that proud, disdainful look and manner which women so readily adopt, when they wish their suitors to understand they have nothing to hope from them.

There was a moment's silence, which he was the first to break. "Madam," said he, "you will, I trust, excuse the means I have devised to secure this interview; but since, notwithstanding my relationship, you seemed disposed to deny me the favour of this *tête-à-tête*, had I ventured to request it, I thought it advisable to deprive you of the power of its refusal."

"If, sir," replied the marchioness, "you have hesitated so much to make so simple a request, and have felt such precautions necessary to compel my attention, it arises doubtless from your consciousness that the proposal you have to make is one unbecoming me to hear. You will have the goodness to reflect, therefore, before you commence the conversation at which you hint; for I warn you that here, as elsewhere, I shall reserve to myself the right to decide the extent to which I may permit you to proceed."

"Upon that point," he answered, "be assured, that whatever topic I may select, you will favour me with your attention to its close; but for the present it is useless to disturb yourself upon a matter so trifling, for I would now merely ask you, have you of late remarked any alteration in your husband's conduct towards you?"

"I have, and daily offer my thanksgiving to Heaven for the happiness I now enjoy."

"You were wrong to do so," he continued, with one of those smiles his features alone could assume: "Heaven has nothing to do with the matter; rather offer thanksgivings for your matchless charms. Heaven will still have other claims upon you, without depriving me of the gratitude which is my due."

"I do not comprehend you," replied the marchioness, in a proud and distant manner.

"Well then, my dear sister, I will explain. I am the cause of the miracle; it is to me, therefore, that your thanks belong."

"You are right, sir; if you be really the cause to whom I owe this happiness, you have every claim upon my gratitude; and to Heaven also it is due for the mercy which inspired the good thought."

"Yes, madam; but the same influence exercised for good may be employed for evil, if I am deprived of the reward I expect."

"What mean you, sir?"

"Simply this, madam; that in my family there is but one will—that will is mine; that my brother's thoughts take their direction from mine, as the waves roll before the wind; and that he who can blow hot can blow cold."

"I still wait your further explanation."

"Well then, since you are unwilling to understand me, I will be at once more frank with you. My brother's jealousy had separated him from you, it was necessary to give you a proof of my influence; from the extreme of indifference I reawakened the ardour of first love; let me but change my purpose and his former enstrangement will ensue. It is unnecessary for me to bring forward facts. *You feel* the truth of what I say."

"And for what purpose has this comedy been composed and acted?"

"To show you that your joys or your sorrows are in my power, and that I can cause you to be cherished or neglected—adored or hated—even as I will. Now, hear me; I love you!"

"This is insulting, sir!" exclaimed the marchioness, endeavouring to withdraw the bridle of her horse from the abbé's hands.

"Moderate your expressions, madam!" he replied, "for upon me, I again warn you, phrases of this description are entirely thrown away.

A woman never yet was insulted by an avowal of love; but there are a thousand different ways of compelling or inducing its return. The fault is, to mistake the means to be employed, and that is all."

"And may I be permitted to inquire the means you have selected?" said the marchioness, with a look of contempt.

"The only means that could possibly be successful with a woman calm, cold, and resolute as yourself; the conviction that your interest would counsel the return of my affections."

"Since you pretend to so accurate a knowledge of my character," making at the same time another fruitless effort to disengage her bridle, "you ought to know also in what manner, a woman such as I am should receive an overture of this description; what I should say to you, and more especially to my husband."

He smiled.

"In that respect you are the mistress of your own actions," he replied. "Pray give utterance to what you please; repeat to him this conversation, word for word; add to it whatever memory or imagination can dictate, true or false, against me; but as soon as you have well schooled him, the moment you believe you have secured a defender *there*, in the next, with but two words, I bend him to my purpose as this glove. I detain you no longer; you have in me a sincere friend or a bitter enemy. Take your choice."

At these words he let go her horse. The marchioness moved forward at a trot; unwilling to evince either fear or haste, he followed her at a leisure pace and rejoined the company. The abbé spoke truth. In spite of her threat, the marchioness reflected upon the influence he could undoubtedly exercise, and was silent, hoping he had, to excite her fears, misrepresented himself. But upon this point she was mistaken. In the meanwhile the abbé sought to ascertain the cause of the rejection of his suit, whether it was personal antipathy or virtue. The chevalier was handsome; he had those manners of good society which supply the want of more solid gifts; he had the self-conceit of common understandings; he resolved to persuade him that he really loved the marchioness. This was not difficult. The chevalier's attentions had not indeed exceeded the bounds of common gallantry, but he was not the less impressed with the charms of the marchioness, who on her side, owing to his relationship, had imposed the less restraint upon her conduct. The abbé sought therefore an interview with his brother.

"Chevalier," said he, "we both love the same woman—our brother's wife—do not let us cross each other's path. I can master my feelings, and sacrifice them the more willingly, believing it is you that she prefers. Endeavour to confirm her favourable impressions. If you are successful, I instantly retire; if you fail, you will then honourably yield to me your position, that I in turn may try whether her heart be as impregnable as it is described."

The chevalier had never hitherto ventured to suppose the result thus openly mentioned by his brother, but the moment that, without any apparent motive of personal interest, he excited the idea that he was loved, immediately all that such a mere automaton could feel of love and pride, was roused into action in the expectation of success. The marchioness received his attentions with feelings the warmer, perhaps, from her contempt for the abbé. Deceived by this, the chevalier explained his views;

the marchioness astonished, and at first doubting the reality, suffered him to proceed, until further hesitation would have been criminal, and thereupon abruptly stopped him, by one of those cutting phrases a woman has recourse to, far more frequently from indifference than virtue. Upon this check the crest-fallen chevalier lost all hope, and frankly told to his brother the unhappy termination of his suit. This was precisely what the abbé had expected and desired; first to gratify his vanity, and secondly for the execution of his plans. He converted the shame of the chevalier into a deadly hatred, and now, sure of a supporter, in fact, of an accomplice, he commenced his projects against his victim. The result was soon observable, by the recurrence of the estrangement, on the part of the marquis. A young man, whom the marchioness had met with in general society, became, if not the cause, at least the pretext, for a fresh fit of jealousy.

This was evinced by irritation upon points in no way immediately connected with the object of his suspicions. The marchioness was not deceived, she still detected the fatal influence of her brother-in-law as the cause; but so far from encouraging compliance, it increased her dislike, and no opportunity was neglected of expressing her contempt for his person and conduct. In this manner, many months were passed; the marquis became daily more cold and distant, and although the spies were unseen, she felt that she was watched on all sides, even to the most private details of daily intercourse. The manners of the abbé and the chevalier were still unchanged, except that the former concealed his hatred beneath his habitual smile, and the chevalier his mortification, in that cold repulsive dignity in which mediocrity invests itself, when resenting the fancied injuries inflicted upon its morbid vanity.

Whilst matters stood thus, M. Joannis de Nochères died, increasing the fortune of his grand-daughter, by a sum amounting to seven hundred thousand livres. This addition to her income, according to the Roman laws which then prevailed, became the exclusive property of the marchioness, was entirely beyond the control of her husband, to be enjoyed and bequeathed in any manner she might prefer. In consequence, a few days after she was placed in full possession of the legacy, her husband and his brothers understood, that a notary had been sent for to explain the legal technicalities of the case; this indicated also the determination of withholding the inheritance from the family; for the conduct of the marquis to his wife had not been such as to encourage the hope it could arise from any other motive.

About this time a strange circumstance occurred. At a dinner party given by the marquis, a cream was placed upon the table, of which all those who ate, became seriously indisposed; more particularly the marchioness, who had rather freely indulged in it, whilst the marquis and his brothers, having carefully abstained, were not affected. This created suspicion, and upon a careful analysis of the remains of the cream, the presence of arsenic was detected; but as it was unattended with any serious result, and was explained as the mistake of a servant, who had taken up arsenic for sugar, the circumstance was passed over, and apparently forgotten. Soon after this event, the marquis seemed disposed to adopt a more endearing, or at least conciliatory manner, but of this the marchioness was not again to be the dupe. In the desire of reconciliation, as in the estrangement, the intriguing spirit of the abbé was discernible; he had persuaded his brother that a large property was worth the forgiveness of a few inconsiderate actions; and, yielding to his suggestions, the marquis hoped, by simulated affection, to divert the marchioness from her present undecided purpose of drawing up her will. It was next proposed, as the season advanced, to pass the remainder of it at Ganges, a little town of Languedoc, about seven leagues from Montpellier, and nineteen from Avignon. Nothing could be more natural, at the same time nothing more instinctively fearful to the marchioness than this proposal; the recollection of the sibyl's prediction, the attempt so recent, and so ill explained, to poison her with the cream, both excited and increased her fears. Without directly laying it to the charge of her brothers-in-law, she felt they were her implacable enemies; and then this visit to a little town,—this residence in a solitary house, amid society to which she was an entire stranger, all these circumstances were of unfavourable augury; and yet directly to oppose them without cause assigned, would be necessarily considered as a ridiculous timidity. Besides, upon what facts could she found resistance; to avow her fears was to accuse her brothers-in-law, and of what? the mere circumstance of the poisoned cream was not conclusive. Nevertheless she determined at least to make her will prior to her departure, for which purpose a notary was sent for, who immediately received his instructions. By this, her mother was left residuary legatee, with remainder to the two children of the marquis, but subject to Madame de Rossan's control. Even this precaution appeared to her as insufficient. So strongly was she impressed by the conviction, that she should never return from Ganges, that the marchioness procured a private meeting of the magistracy, and of many of the most respectable inhabitants of Avignon, and before them she herself declared the will, then produced, to be her sole act; and requested them never to admit as legal any other document which might hereafter be produced; assuring them such a deed would be obtained only from her either by fraud or violence. This declaration made, it was next reduced to writing, signed, witnessed, and then deposited by her in the custody of those she had appointed guardians. Such precautions very naturally excited inquiries, but to these the marchioness replied, that many very pressing reasons, and not to be then made public, induced her to act as she had done.

The cause therefore of this meeting was unknown, and the marchioness besought those, who had been parties to it, to remain silent upon the subject.

Her departure to Avignon had much in it characteristic of a criminal's procession to the place of execution: she made considerable donations to the poor, bade farewell to her friends, as one who parts from them for ever, and passed the night prior to her journey in fasting and earnest prayer. They arrived at Ganges without any accident, and the marchioness here met her mother-in-law, a pious and highly accomplished lady, who although merely a passing visiter at the chateau, yet contributed by her presence greatly to her comfort and relief. Every arrangement had also been made, and the best and most commodious bedroom, situated upon the principal floor, and opening upon a large courtyard, surrounded by the stables, was prepared for her reception. This was immediately examined by the marchioness with the utmost care; cabinets, walls, and tapestry were diligently searched, and as every thing tended to induce security, her fears gradually subsided. Soon after the mother of the marquis quitted Ganges for Montpellier, and a few days subsequent to this the marquis, alleging some pressing matters of business, departed also for Avignon. The marchioness was thus left alone with her brothers-in-law and a priest named Perrette, who had been in the service of the family for twenty-five years. Her first object, upon arriving at Ganges, had been to form an acquaintance with the most respectable families of the town; a precaution the more useful, as instead of residing during the autumn only, the marchioness, according to her husband's letters, would be constrained to reside there throughout the winter. During this interval the manner also of her relations had changed; they seemed forgetful of the past, and their conduct was at once respectful and attentive. But the marquis was still absent, and although she had less fear, her grief was undiminished. One morning, whilst thus dwelling upon the painful circumstances of her life, the abbé suddenly entered her room, and before she could recover her self-possession, became acquainted with the secret cause of her affliction; for the marchioness admitted that whilst thus suffering from her husband's estrangement, it was useless to appear happy. The abbé endeavoured to console her, but whilst so doing, reproached her as being the cause of her own wrong; that her distrust of her husband had very naturally excited angry feelings on his part; a distrust the more humiliating as so openly displayed by the will she had made, and the manner in which it had been witnessed: adding, that until that deed was cancelled, she could not expect the re-establishment of the affection that once existed between them. The conversation here stopped. A few days after he again re-entered her room, with a letter from his brother in his hand. This letter, marked private, was replete with the kindest complaints of his wife's conduct; every sentence displayed the tenderest affection, restrained only by the quick feelings of the wrongs that the marquis believed himself to suffer. The marchioness felt at first disposed to yield, but reflecting that sufficient time had elapsed to enable the abbé to communicate the former conversation to his brother, of which this letter might be the prepared result, she determined to wait other and stronger evidence of the truth of its contents. In the mean time, however, the abbé became daily more pressing upon the subject of the will, and the marchioness, disquieted by his manner, felt her former anxieties revive. Indeed, he soon became apparently so bent upon its revocation, that reflecting that after the precautions she had taken at Avignon, it would necessarily be held as an informal document, and fearful moreover, by a continued and determined refusal, to excite his hatred, she finally consented, as a fresh proof of her affections, and in the hope it might win over those of her husband, to rescind her former will, and to draw up another, in which the marquis, instead of her mother, was named residuary legatee. This was dated May 5th, 1667.

The abbé and the chevalier expressed very earnestly the pleasure with which they witnessed this final removal of all further cause of discord; and warmly promised, upon their brother's part, the renewal of his former affection. This hope was indulged for some days, and was further confirmed by a letter from the marquis, which announced also his immediate return to Ganges.

About the 16th of May, the marchioness, owing to some trifling indisposition, desired the attendance of an apothecary, whom she requested to prepare some medicine according to her own prescription. He did so; but upon receiving this, it appeared so black and thick, that, fearful of some mistake, the marchioness put it aside, and availed herself of some trifling remedies at hand. The time had hardly elapsed for her taking the first prescription, when the abbé and the chevalier sent to make inquiries about her health. She thanked and invited them, in return, to partake of a small collation in the afternoon, with herself and some other ladies. An hour after, these inquiries were renewed, and the marchioness, not at the moment paying much attention to this excess of civility, replied that she was greatly better. She remained, however, in bed to do the honours of the collation, and soon after the guests assembled, to whom the abbé and the chevalier were introduced. Neither of them, however, would partake of the meal; the former, indeed, seated himself at the table, whilst the chevalier remained standing at the foot of the bed. The abbé was silent and thoughtful, mingling occasionally in conversation with the manner of one escaping from some dominant idea that absorbs his attention against his will, and which, perpetually recurring to his mind, induces fits of abstraction, or of unconscious revery; and this the more excited attention, from being so opposed to his general habits. The chevalier, on the contrary, seemed conscious only of the presence of his sister-in-law, who, more beautiful than ever, attracted his undivided attention. The collation finished, the ladies retired, accompanied by the abbé, but no sooner had he quitted the room, than the marchioness observed the chevalier become extremely pale, and fall, as if suddenly taken ill, upon her bed. She inquired with much anxiety as to the cause; but before he could reply, the door opened, and her attention was drawn to another sight. It was the abbé, who, pale and overcome by the violence of his conflicting passions, re-entered the room, holding in his hand a pistol and a glass. He next closed and locked the door, which so alarmed the marchioness, that she half rose from her bed, fixing her eyes upon him, but incapable of uttering a word. His lips quivering, his face livid, his eyes burning with excitement, he approached the bed, and presenting the glass in one hand and with the other pointing the pistol towards her,—

"Choose, madam," said he, after a moment's awful silence, as if struggling with some powerful feeling—"choose your death, by pistol—this pistol—or (turning to the chevalier) the sword."

A moment's gleam of hope encouraged the marchioness; for, as the chevalier drew his sword, she trusted it was in her defence, but undeceived, and thus placed, unprotected, in the power of two such men, she sank in agony before them upon her bed.

"What evil have I done," she exclaimed, "that you thus sentence me to death—and after condemning me as judges, would thus slay me as executioners? I am guiltless; my fault only is the observance of my duty towards my husband—your brother." Then, at once perceiving remonstance was in vain,—for the determined looks and impatient gestures evinced the inflexible resolution of the abbé,—she turned towards the chevalier, "And you also, my brother," said she—"you also! Have pity on me! as you hope yourself for mercy.—Oh! spare me!"

But he, stamping with his foot upon the floor, directed his sword's point to her breast, and replied,—

"Enough of this; delay your choice no longer; for if not, madam, it will be for us immediately to decide."

She turned round, as if once more to address the abbé; and as she did so, the muzzle of his pistol struck her mouth. She felt that she must die, and selecting that which seemed its least terrible form,—

"Give me, then, the poison," she exclaimed; "and may God forgive you my death!"

Upon this she took the glass, but its contents were so repulsive, that with a look expressing a last entreaty, she put it from her; but the fearful blasphemy which burst from the lips of the abbé, and the threatening gesture of his brother, destroyed every hope, however faint, of mercy. She raised the glass to her lips, looked at them, and murmuring a prayer to heaven, swallowed its contents. As she did so, some drops of the deadly mixture fell upon her neck and breast, and burnt it like fire; for, in fact, the execrable miscreants had composed it of arsenic and sublimate of mercury, diluted with aqua fortis. Thus made the agent of their crime, she let the glass fall, believing even their cruelties could exact no further torture. She was mistaken; the abbé remarked that some of the poison was precipitated to the bottom of the glass, and this he collected, and presenting it to her at the point of a silver bodkin, rolled together in the form and size of a small nut,—

"Come, madam," said he, "come! you must swallow this last most exquisite drop."

She apparently complied, but instead of swallowing, retained it in her mouth, and then throwing herself upon her bed, contrived to eject it unperceived. Then, once more turning towards them, she cried, with her hands raised towards heaven,—

"Since you have destroyed my body, have yet some mercy upon my soul; let me at least see my confessor."

Remorseless as they were, her assassins felt probably some slight emotion at the sight; moreover, after the poison she had taken, death could but be retarded a few hours: they therefore quitted the room to comply with her request, and closed the door after them.

Scarcely was she alone, than the possibility of escape flashed across her mind. She ran to the window, which was twenty-two feet from the ground, and this was covered with stones and rubbish. Then seizing some clothes, she was hastily dressing herself, when the sound of approaching footsteps was heard, and believing her murderers were returning to assure themselves of her death, she rushed almost frantic to the window. The instant that her foot rested upon the sill, the door opened, and she at once threw herself headlong from the height. This was the chaplain of the marquis, who was fortunately enabled to seize her clothes as she fell; but these, too slight to sustain her weight, were yet sufficient to change the direction of her fall, so that the grasp, although it tore them, yet broke her descent, and she reached the ground uninjured. Stunned, and almost senseless, she was yet conscious of something which passed her as she fell, and rebounded with great violence near her. This was an enormous water jug, which the execrable priest, seeing she had escaped him, dashed after, with the hope of killing her by the blow, but it broke in pieces at her feet; whereupon he immediately ran to acquaint the abbé and the chevalier their victim was escaping. In the mean time, with an admirable presence of mind, she contrived to reject the poison she had taken, and then running towards the stables, directed by a light which was there burning, she accosted one of the grooms.

"In the name of God," she cried, "help me, I am poisoned; they wish to kill me; open me the door leading from this courtyard, that I may save my life."

The groom very imperfectly understood the request; but perceiving a woman half naked, and beseeching his protection, he took her under his arm, led her immediately across the stables, and opened a door into the street, where, meeting two women, he confided the marchioness to their care, but unable to explain the cause either of her fear or of her disordered state.

The marchioness herself seemed capable only of uttering exclamations for their aid: "Help me, I am poisoned; in the name of heaven, help me." Suddenly darting forwards from their hands, she rushed into the town, for but twenty feet from her, upon the threshold of the door she had just left, she saw her assassins in quick pursuit. Thus they passed through the streets, she crying out that they had poisoned her; her assassins shouting she was mad; whilst the people, doubtful which course to pursue, allowed her to pass unassisted; for by her appearance and frantic cries, it was hardly possible to believe but that her brothers-in-law spoke truth. The chevalier at last overtook her, instantly dragged her into the nearest house, and closed the door, upon the threshold of which the abbé stood with a pistol in his hand, threatening to blow out the brains of the first person who should dare to come to her assistance. The house belonged to a M. Desprats, then absent from home, but whose wife was at that moment in company with several of her female friends.

Struggling against the force of her enemy, the marchioness was borne into the room; and as many of the ladies there assembled had been admitted into her society, her appearance excited the greatest astonishment and sympathy. They arose therefore with offers of assistance, but the chevalier repulsed them, continually asserting she was mad; to which repeated asseveration the marchioness replied by pointing to her neck and lips, burnt and disfigured by the poison, declaring she was dying, and urgently requesting them to give her some milk, or at least some water. Upon this a Madame Brunelle, the wife of a protestant minister, slipped into her hand a box of orvietan, of which she hastily swallowed a small portion; whilst another, with ready kindness, gave her a glass of water; but the moment she placed it against her mouth, the chevalier broke it against her teeth, so that the fragments cut her lips. The women upon this called loudly for assistance, and surrounded the chevalier in the greatest excitement; but the marchioness, still hoping to turn his heart towards mercy, besought them to retire, and to leave her with him alone, to which they acceded, and withdrew into the adjoining room. She threw herself upon her knees as they did so, and supplicated him, by the memory of her past kindness to himself and to his family, to have pity upon her, and promised that if even now he would save her life, to forget what had occurred, and to consider and receive him always as her protector and friend. Whilst she spoke, the chevalier unperceived had drawn his sword, which was very short, and, using it as a dagger, he struck her with it in the breast; this blow was followed by another near the collar-bone, upon which the marchioness arose, and, uttering a loud shriek, rushed towards the door of the room adjoining, crying loudly for assistance. As she did so he repeated his attack, and struck her five times more in different parts of the back, and was continuing so to do, when at last the sword broke in the shoulder, owing to the violence of a blow which knocked her down, bathed in blood, that now streamed along the floor The chevalier thought that she was dead, and hearing the women rushing to her assistance, escaped from the room, and found the abbé still upon the threshold, with his pistol ready cocked, whereupon, seizing him by the hand, he said, as his brother seemed to hesitate, "Let us go, abbé, the business is over."

They hardly proceeded a few steps, when a window was thrown up, and the ladies who had found the marchioness expiring, called loudly upon the people for aid; upon which the abbé, detaining his brother by the arm, said:

"What means this, chevalier? if they call for succour, she is surely not dead."

"Go then, and see to it yourself," replied the chevalier, "I have done enough for my part; it is your turn now."

"That is exactly my opinion," cried the abbé, and rushing again into the house, he pushed aside the ladies, who had now raised the dying marchioness, and were placing her upon a bed, and advancing close to her, applied the muzzle of the pistol to her breast; but the instant he touched the trigger, Madame Brunelle raised his hand, so that the ball instead of taking effect, was lodged in the cornice of the ceiling. The abbé upon this seized the pistol by the barrel, and struck her so violent a blow with its butt-end upon the head, that she reeled backwards and fell, but before he could repeat the blow, the ladies surrounded, and thrust him amid the loudest execrations to the door, which they closed upon him. He rejoined his brother, and profiting by the night, the assassins fled to Ganges, and arrived at Aubenas, a considerable distance from it, at about ten o'clock.

In the mean time, every possible attention was paid to the marchioness. They attempted at first to put her to bed, but this was prevented, owing to the piece of the sword which still remained sticking in her shoulder. The marchioness herself now pointed out the way for its removal; Madame Brunelle seated herself upon the bed, and whilst the other ladies supported the marchioness, she seized the sword with both her hands, and fixing her knees against the sufferer's back, drew it out with a sudden jerk, by main force. The marchioness could now lie down; it was nine in the evening, and this horrible tragedy had already lasted three hours.

The magistrates of Ganges were now acquainted with the event, and, believing it to be really an assassination, proceeded to the house with a guard of soldiers. The marchioness arose from her bed as they entered the room, and eagerly besought them with clasped hands to protect her, for so great was her fear, that she constantly thought she saw the assassins returning to complete their execrable attempt; but the magistrates tranquillized her, and placed guards at every approach to the house. Messengers were next despatched to Montpellier for medical aid; and, at the same time, information of the crime was forwarded to Baron Trissan, the governor of Languedoc, with the names and description of the assassins. He gave immediate orders for their pursuit, but it was already too late; he learnt only that the abbé and the chevalier had slept after the deed at Aubenas, and that after violent recriminations upon their failure, the cause of which they imputed to each other, and which was nearly terminated by a duel, they had next morning, before daybreak, got on board a vessel and escaped.

The Marquis de Ganges was at Avignon, engaged in prosecuting a servant, who had robbed him of two hundred crowns. When he heard of this event, he betrayed at first great horror upon the narration of the facts; then bursting into violent exclamations of rage, he swore that his brothers should have himself for their executioner; nevertheless, distressed as he might be, he by no means hurried his departure, and although he met during the interval some of his associates at Avignon, never in any manner mentioned to them the horrible event.

He reached Ganges four days afterwards, went to the house of M. Desprats, and asked to see his wife, who, owing to the kindly offices of some priests, was already prepared to receive him. The marquis immediately entered the room at her request; he was in tears, and evinced, by his frantic gestures, every appearance of the deepest grief. The marchioness received her husband, as a forgiving wife and a dying Christian. Scarcely had she gently reproached him for his past neglect, than upon his expressing his regret to a clergyman that she had so done, she recalled him towards her, when her bed was most surrounded by their friends, and besought his forgiveness, assuring him, that the words which had hurt his feelings, were wrung from her by pain, and were not the consequence either of estrangement or of the withdrawal of esteem. Notwithstanding this, when alone with his wife, the marquis sought to induce her to cancel the will she had attested before the magistrates of Avignon, who, faithful to their engagements, had refused to register the subsequent deed made at Ganges at the instigation of the abbé, and which, the moment her signature was attached to it, he had forwarded to his brother. But upon this point she was inflexible, declaring this property should be reserved for his children, and that she could not alter the document drawn up at Avignon, inasmuch as it still gave effect to her real and unchanged wishes.

This resolution by no means altered the conduct of the marquis, who still remained discharging towards her every duty incumbent upon a devoted and attentive husband. Madame de Rossan, the mother of the marchioness, had now arrived, and great was her surprise, when considering the statements which were bruited about the marquis, to find her daughter in the hands of one, whom she could only consider as an accomplice in her murder. Far, however, from giving credence to this opinion, the marchioness exerted all the influence she possessed, not only to combat and overcome them, but to induce her mother to embrace him as a son. This infatuation so greatly shocked the feelings of Madame de Rossan, that although still struggling with the strongest affection for her daughter, she remained with her only two days, and, notwithstanding the most pressing entreaties of the dying sufferer, returned home. Her departure caused the greatest sorrow to the marchioness, who now urgently entreated to be conveyed to Montpellier; the very sight of the place of her cruel assassination not only reviving the scene, but the features of her murderers, which haunted her imagination so incessantly, that, in the moments when relaxation from pain suffered her to enjoy a short repose, she awoke with a start, uttering fearful cries, and calling loudly for assistance. Unfortunately the physician considered her utterly unable to endure the removal, and declared it could not be attempted but with the greatest danger.

Upon hearing this, which it was requisite to communicate, and which her hectic complexion, and still lustrous eyes, seemed to contradict, the marchioness turned her thoughts towards a religious preparation for death; desiring only, after having suffered as a martyr, to expire with the resignation of a saint. She expressed, therefore, a wish to receive the viaticum, and during the interval, before the arrival of the priest, renewed her expressions of forgiveness, both of her husband, and of her murderers, with such meekness and sincerity, that, combined with her beauty, it made her seem a being almost angelic. Upon the entrance of the priest, however, she was extremely agitated, and evinced once more the greatest fear. For he who came to administer tho last consolations of religion was the infamous Perrette, he whom she must consider as the accomplice of her assassins; the man who had tried to kill her, and, failing in his attempt, had excited her murderers to the pursuit of their victim. She gradually, however, recovered her self-possession, and seeing him approach her bed without the slightest compunction, she was willing to avoid the public scandal of denouncing him at such a time. Leaning therefore towards him, she said,

"I trust that both in remembrance of what has occurred, and to dissipate those fears which I am justified in feeling, that you will not hesitate to partake of this sacrament with me; for I have heard, in the hands of the wicked, that the body of our Lord, instead of being the symbol of salvation, has become the type of death."

The priest bowed in token of his acquiescence, and received the sacrament with the marchioness, who thus evinced her desire to pardon him as well as his accomplices, beseeching also for them the forgiveness both of God and man. Days elapsed without any sensible change; the fever in her veins gave fresh lustre to her beauty and added to her voice and manner an energy heretofore unknown. Every heart fluttered with hope except her own; she knew the hand of death was on her, and allowed no vain illusion to allure her thoughts from the future. Her son, a child of seven years old, was constantly by her side; and was hourly desired never to permit the scene before him to lose its influence, or to forget his mother in his prayers. He promised never to forget.

"But I will avenge you!" said he, "when I am a man."

She gently checked aud reminded him, vengeance belonged to God, and to the justice of the king.

Upon the third of June M. Catalan, the councillor of the parliament of Toulouse, arrived, with all the officers of the commission of inquiry; but owing to the state of the marchioness, his visit was delayed until the following morning. After a slight opposition he was admitted to her presence. She received him with so much calmness, that the councillor was induced to believe the resistance to his visit arose from interested motives on the part of those under whose care she was then placed. At first she was unwilling to give any account of the event, saying she could not accuse and pardon at the same time; but impressed with the necessity of making a correct statement, lest the innocent should be confounded or condemned with the guilty, she consented, and related every circumstance connected with the event. At a subsequent interview, the marchioness was evidently so much worse, that M. Catalan spared her the fatigue of another examination.

From this period her sufferings were so great that they overcame the strength of mind with which they had hitherto been endured, and wrung from her cries of agony, mingled with prayers. It was in this manner she lingered throughout the fourth and part of the following day, when, towards four o'clock, she silently expired. Her body was immediately opened, and the physicians reported her death to have been caused by poison, none of the seven blows from the sword of the chevalier being mortal. Notwithstanding, however, the strength of the deadly poison, which, according to the procès-verbal, would have killed a lioness in a few hours, the marchioness had lingered nineteen days; so lovingly, adds the narrative from which these details have been partly borrowed, so lovingly did nature defend the beautiful being she had taken such pains to form.

The moment of her death, M. Catalan arrested the marquis, the priest, and all the servants of his household, except the groom who had assisted the marchioness in her escape. The soldiers despatched for this purpose found the marquis pacing the hall of his house, in a downcast, agitated manner. He offered no resistance, but stated his readiness to obey their instructions, and that it had been always his fixed intention to prosecute the murderers of his wife. They demanded his keys, which he gave up, and was sent with the other prisoners to Montpellier. The instant he approached the city, the rumour of it spread with inconceivable rapidity from house to house. It was night, and as the inhabitants had placed candles in their windows, or came forth bearing torches as he passed along, his course was marked by a blaze of light, which enabled every one to see him. He was, as well as the priest, seated upon a miserable hack-horse, surrounded by archers, to whom doubtless he owed his life, for so great was the excitement against him, that, without their protection, he would have been torn in pieces by the crowd. Madame de Rossan now obtained possession of her daughter's property, and declared her resolution never to forego legal proceedings until she had avenged her atrocious murder. M. Catalan immediately commenced the proceedings; the marquis and his associates were transferred from the prisons of Montpellier to those of Toulouse; and here they were met by an overwhelming accusation on the part of Madame de Rossan, which clearly showed the participation of the marquis in the guilt of his brothers, if not by act, at least by desire, thought, and will. The defence of the marquis was extremely simple: he had the misfortune to have two infamous men for brothers, who first attempted the honour, and then destroyed the life of a wife to whom he was tenderly attached; and in addition to this, he was himself accused, although in every respect innocent, of being a participator in their crimes. In truth, minutely particular as were the details of the indictment, it was rather moral presumption than positive evidence of guilt which they adduced, and they were therefore insufficient, in the opinion of the judges, to justify the sentence of death upon the marquis.

Upon the 21st of August, 1667, the judgment of the court was delivered, by which the abbé and the chevalier were condemned to be broken alive upon the wheel; the marquis to perpetual banishment from the kingdom, all his property confiscated to the king, to be degraded from his rank, and declared incapable of inheriting the wealth or estates of his children. Perrette was condemned to the galleys for life, being first deprived of his spiritual rank by the ecclesiastical power. Thi sdecree caused as great an excitement as the murder; and at that period, when the doctrine of extenuating circumstances had not been promulgated, bec subject of very violent discussions. One thing is perfectly clear,—the marquis was guilty, or he was not; if not, the punishment was cruelly severe; if he were, it was much too lenient. This was the opinion of Louis XIV., who dwelt with kindness upon the memory of the beauty of the unfortunate Marchioness de Ganges; for, some time after, when they thought the king had forgotten the event, and petitioned for a pardon on behalf of the Marquis de la Donze, accused of poisoning his wife,—

"There is no occasion for me to pardon," replied Louis, "since he belongs to the parliament of Toulouse from which the Marquis of Ganges escaped so easily."

And now, as the reader, who has perused and felt probably an interest in this narrative, may desire to know the ultimate fate of the assassins, we shall trace their career, until they disappeared, either shrouded in the darkness of the tomb, or buried in the obscurity of forgetfulness.

Perrette was the first who was summoned to appear before his Maker; he died, working at the chain, in the passage from Toulouse to Brest. The chevalier retired to Naples, and enlisted in the service of the republic, then at war with the Turks; and was sent to Candia, which had been besieged for twenty-two years. He had hardly arrived there, when, walking upon the ramparts with two other officers, a bomb-shell fell and exploded at their feet, killing the chevalier, without hurting his companions in the slightest degree; an event which was generally considered as the judgment of heaven.

The subsequent career of the abbé was more protracted and more strange; he parted from his brother in the neighbourhood of Genoa, traversed Piedmont, part of Switzerland and Germany, and reached Holland, under the name of Lamartelliere. After much hesitation as to his place of residence, he fixed at last upon Viana, of which the Count de Lippe was then governor. He here became acquainted with a gentleman, who introduced him to the count as a French refugee on account of his religion. At the very first interview the Count de Lippe perceived the very superior qualities of his mind, and that he was well versed also in literature and the exact sciences, on which account he proposed to him to undertake the education of his son, then nine years of age, a proposal which was a fortune to the abbé, and such as he could not venture to decline. Possessing the most powerful self-control, the moment when interest and the preservation of life imposed upon him the necessity of concealing his bad passions, he dissembled so well, that in him only was now observable the precepts of the severe preceptor, who trains the mind to virtue, and governs the feelings of the heart. Thus assiduously directing his attention to the cultivation of his heart and mind, he succeeded in educating so accomplished a pupil, that the Count de Lippe profited by the councils of the preceptor, even upon state affairs; so much so, that in a short time, without occupying any public situation, Lamartelliere had become the life and soul of this little principality. The Countess de Lippe had residing with her at this period a young relation, not wealthy, but of very noble rank, for whom she felt the strongest friendship; nor was it long before she perceived that this lady regarded her brother's tutor with feelings unbecoming her high station; a feeling which, imboldened by his continually increasing credit, the pretended Lamartelliere had directed all his efforts to inspire and to maintain. The countess, upon this, h[illegible] interview with her cousin, obtained an avowal of her affec[illegible]ted that both the count and herself felt much interest in her son's preceptor, and sought to reward his services both to her family and the state, by grants and offices of rank; but that it was an ambition far too aspiring in a man, who called himself Lamartelliere, and had not either relations or family he could or dared acknowledge, to venture to seek an alliance with a lady of royal blood; that she did not require that the betrothed of her cousin should be a Bourbon, a Montmorency, or a Rohan, but at least she did expect he should be of some acknowledged condition, were he only a gentleman of Gascony or Poitou.

The lady retired from her cousin's presence to repeat word by word this conversation to her lover, believing that he would be overcome by its narration; but he, on the contrary, replied, that since his birth seemed to be the only obstacle to their union, the means were in his power to remove this objection.

For, in fact, after a residence of eight years with the prince, which had passed amid the highest marks of confidence, and the greatest consideration of his services, the abbé thought himself sufficiently secure of the protection of his patron, to venture to reveal his name. He requested an audience therefore, with the countess, which was instantly granted, and bowing before her with the greatest respect,—

"Madam," said he, "I flattered myself that you honoured me with your esteem, and yet you oppose my happiness. Your relation would willingly accept me for her husband, and the prince, your son, authorises the avowal of my affection, and excuses its boldness. What have I done? How incurred your displeasure? that I find you thus alone against me; and of what can you reproach me during the eight years that I have had the honour of passing in your service?"

"I do not reproach you, sir," replied the countess; "but I seek to avoid the reproach of countenancing a marriage of this kind. I should have thought you were a man of too much common sense, far to rational, thus to force me to recall to your recollection, that so long as you limited yourself to becoming requests, and moderate desires, you would have had every reason to be satisfied with my grateful sense of your deserts. Do you ask that your appointments should be doubled? it is easily done. Do you seek offices of importance? you will be appointed; but forget not yourself, sir, to the extent of aspiring to an alliance which you never can imagine you can contract."

"Madam," he replied, "who then has told you that my birth was so obscure that it ought to forbid the indulgence of all hope of your consent?"

"Who? yourself, sir, it appears to me," exclaimed the countess with astonishment, "or if you have not done so, your name has given currency to the supposition."

"But if that name be not really mine?" said the abbé, more emboldened. "If unfortunate circumstances, terrible and fatal events have compelled me beneath that name to hide another, unhappily too well known, would your highness, in such case, be so unjust as to retain your opinion?"

"Sir!" answered the countess, "you have said too much, to conceal what may remain untold. Who are you? Speak on. Should you be really a man of family, be assured it is not deficiency of wealth that shall be an impediment upon my part."

"Alas! madam," replied the abbé, as he knelt before her; "my name, I am convinced, is but too well known to you, and willingly, at this hour, would I forfeit half of my existence, could I thus have prevented its utterance to you; but you have said it; I have gone too far to recede; I am, madam, that unhappy Abbé de Ganges, whose crimes are known to you, and of which I have often heard the recital from your lips."

"The Abbé de Ganges!" exclaimed the countess with horror. "The Abbé de Ganges! You are that execrable Abbé de Ganges, whose name alone makes me shudder. And it is to you—to a murderer—a man eternally infamous, that we have intrusted the education of an only son. Oh! may it be that you have falsely spoken; for, be it but the truth, I feel that I ought this moment to arrest and send you into France to undergo the punishment you have deserved. Your best course, if you have spoken the truth, is to quit not only this palace, but the city—the principality; and I shall feel, to the remainder of my life, the torture of regret, every time I recall to my recollection, that for eight years we have lived beneath the protection of the same roof."

The abbé would have replied, but the countess spoke in a tone so heightened by her feelings, that the young prince, whose interest his preceptor had secured, and who was then listening at the door, anxious to know how the affair of his protégé had terminated, unfortunately entered the room, in the hope of effecting its adjustment. He found his mother still so frightened, that, by a natural impulse, she drew him close to her as if to protect him, and, notwithstanding his prayers and intreaties, all he could obtain was, permission for his preceptor to retire unmolested into whatever country he should prefer, but upon the express condition never again to enter the principality or appear before the Count or Countess de Lippe.

The abbé upon this withdrew to Amsterdam, where he became a teacher of languages, and whither the lady of his love soon followed and married him! His pupil, whose parents could not, even by the declaration of his real name, induce him to share the horror they felt, supported him in his poverty, until his wife obtaining her majority, entered into the possession of some personal property. His well-regulated conduct, his scientific acquirements, which long and laborious study had so perfected, obtained him admittance finally to the Protestant Consistory, where he died after a most exemplary life, but whether the result of hypocrisy or repentance can be known to God alone.

With respect to the marquis, condemned as we have seen to banishment, and the confiscation of his estates, he was conducted to the frontiers of Savoy, and there set at liberty. After an absence of two or three years, to let the event, with which he had been mixed up, in some degree subside from public recollection, he returned to France; and as no one (Madame de Rossan being now dead) had any further interest in his prosecution, remained, although almost in concealment, at his chateau at Ganges.

M. de Baville however, the governor of Languedoc, received information that he had returned, but it was intimated to him at the same time, that the marquis, in his catholic zeal, compelled his vassals to attend mass, whatever their religion might be; and as this was the period of the persecution of the Reformers, this conduct of the marquis appeared to the governor to do more than compensate for the crime of which he was accused. Instead, therefore, of immediately arresting, he entered into a secret correspondence with him; assured his safety, and encouraged his religious zeal.

Twelve years thus passed away; in the mean time, his son whom we have seen attending the deathbed of his mother, had now attained the age of twenty; and rich at once by his father's possessions, which his uncle had surrendered to him, and by the inheritance of his mother, which he had shared with his sister, he had married a young, wealthy, handsome, and highly-connected lady, Mademoiselle de Moissac. Called upon to join his regiment, he had brought his wife to Ganges, and earnestly recommending her to his kindness, he left her beneath his protection.

The marquis was at this period forty-two years of age, yet still so extremely handsome, he had scarcely the appearance of being thirty; he become enamoured of his daughter-in-law, and hoped to seduce her affections, and the better to succeed, his first care, under a religious pretext, was to remove from her a young girl, who had been her companion from infancy, and to whom she was much attached. This measure, of which she knew not the cause, very greatly distressed her; it was much against her wish she had been brought to inhabit this old castle, the theatre of an event so fearful as that we have related; and then too, of such recent occurrence. She occupied the room in which the assassination had been committed,—the chamber—the very bed, was the same in which she had slept—the window by which she had escaped was before her, and every thing, even to the least portion of the furniture, summoned up and presented to her fancy the details of this most fearful tragedy. But when the designs of her father-in-law developed themselves, when she saw herself loved by one, whose name only in fancy had thrilled her with fear; moreover, when hourly she found herself alone with a man, whom public rumour still branded as a murderer, every circumstance became terribly prophetic, and increased from fear to horror. Thus she lived, passing her days as much as possible amid the ladies of Ganges, many of whom had been eyewitnesses of the murder of her mother-in-law; they increased her alarm by their recitals, of which, with the desperate energy of fear, she pressed the incessant repetition. Her nights were spent generally undressed, upon her knees in prayer, trembling at the slightest sound, and seeming but to breathe in safety as light returned, when she ventured to obtain a few hours' feverish repose. The designs of the marquis became at last so pressing, and so evident, that Mademoiselle de Moissac resolved at every risk to escape from him; she thought therefore at first to write to her father to explain her situation, and require his assistance; but he had only lately joined the catholic church, and had endured much on account of his adherence to the reformed faith; it was clear therefore her letter would be opened by the marquis, on the pretext of religion; and this step, instead of effecting her liberation, would cause more probably her destruction. She had but one chance of safety; her husband was a catholic, a captain of dragoons, and of tried fidelity to his king; there was no cause to justify the opening, or the perusal of his letter. She resolved to write, she described her situation, had the letter addressed by another hand, and sent it to the post-office at Montpellier.

The young marquis was at Metz when it arrived. He read, and immediately the recollections of childhood arose in all their force; he felt as if again present by the bedside of his expiring parent; he recalled his vows never to forget—daily to pray for her repose. He thought of his wife, whom he tenderly loved, in the same room, exposed to similar violence, destined it might be to the same fate. It was sufficient to determine his instant resolution; he threw himself into a chaise, arrived at Versailles, and requested an audience of the king. This was immediately granted, and, kneeling before Louis XIV., he placed his wife's letter in his hand, beseeching him to compel his father to return to his exile, and promising, upon his honour, to supply him liberally with whatever might be requisite for his becoming support. The king was ignorant that the Marquis de Ganges had returned from banishment, and the manner in which he was thus acquainted with it, was not of a nature to induce him to take a favourable or compassionate view of the fact, that he had contravened his justice. He gave, therefore, immediate orders that if M. de Ganges was found in France, he should be most rigorously prosecuted. Fortunately for the marquis, his brother, who had remained and even enjoyed some favour at the court of France, heard soon after of this decision of the king, whereupon he instantly proceeded from Versailles, and reached Ganges in time to acquaint the marquis with the threatened danger, upon which they departed directly and withdrew to Avignon. The Venaissin then belonged to the pope, and was governed by a vice-legate, and therefore was considered as a foreign territory. He here met his daughter, Madame d'Urban, who exerted all her influence to detain him near her; but this would have been too openly to oppose the orders of the king, and the marquis did not dare thus to expose himself to notice, lest punishment should overtake him: he retired, therefore, to the little village of l'Isle, which occupies a beautiful situation near the fountain of Vaucluse.

From this time his history is a blank; no one heard his name again mentioned; and even when, in 1835, I travelled to the south in the hope of being enabled to recover some traces of the obscure and unknown death, which had closed a career so turbulent and exciting, every effort was unattended with the slightest success. Since, during the recital of the last circumstances in the life of the marquis, we have mentioned the name of his daughter, Madame d'Urban, it is, perhaps, requisite to detail some events in her life, however scandalous they may be, the more completely to exhibit the destiny of a family, which, either by its crimes or eccentricities, engaged for more than a century the attention of France.

Upon the death of her mother, her daughter, then about six years of age, was placed under the protection of the Dowager Marchioness de Ganges, who, when she had obtained the age of twelve years, introduced the Marquis de Perrant, the early lover of her grandmother, as her future husband. Athough seventy, (for the marquis, born under Henry IV., had seen the court of Louis XIII., and the early period of that of Louis XIV., of which he had been one of the most elegant and favourite members,) he still retained the manners of those two periods, so remarkable for their gallantry, insomuch that the young lady, ignorant of the situation she was to occupy, and who had never yet seen or enjoyed the society of other men, yielded without repugnance, and felt herself happy in becoming the Marchioness de Perrant. The marquis, who was extremely wealthy, had quarrelled with his youngest brother, and hated him with such intensity, that his principal object in this marriage was the hope of excluding him from the succession to his estates, to which he could lay claim, upon failure of heirs male. But fearful at the expiration of two years, that his purpose would be frustrated, and unable to restrain his passionate desire of revenge, he sought to gratify it at the expense of his wife's honour. For this end, he encouraged the passion he had discovered existing for his mistress, on the part of her page, stimulating his attempts, and almost betraying the marchioness into his power. Moreover, defeated by her purity and sense of duty, he himself supplicated her to yield to the desires of her servant, upon which she replied to him, with a firmness and dignity, unexpected at her age—

"That there were limits even to his power in her respect, and however anxious she might be to act in accordance with his wishes, they were not to be conciliated at the expense of her innocence and honour."

About three months from this the marquis died, upon which his friend, the Marquis d'Urban, when her time of mourning had elapsed, introduced to the marchioness his son, who, attracting and winning the affections of the youthful widow, was in due time united to her. They lived happily together for many years, their family increased around them, and life passed away in the customary manner of country residents, when the Chevalier de Bouillon arrived in the capital of the Venaissin. He was the type of the roués of the period, young, handsome, the nephew of an influential cardinal of Rome, and proud of his relationship, with a house possessed of regal privileges. The chevalier, in his indiscreet fatuity, spared none, so that his amours had become the scandal of the court, when Madame de Maintenon first began to reign within its circle.

One of his friends, aware of the dissatisfaction which Louis XIV., who then was affecting the devotee, had expressed against him, thought to be of service in acquainting the marquis that the king *had a tooth* against him.

"Pardieu!" replied the chevalier, "I am extremely sorry that the only tooth yet remaining in his majesty's head should have been preserved to bite me!"

The retort reached the ears of the king; so that, shortly after, the chevalier received an intimation, that Louis XIV. recommended him to travel for a few years; whereupon, knowing the danger of neglecting such advice, and preferring the country to the Bastille, he quitted Paris, and arrived at Avignon, with all the interest usually connected with a handsome, youthful, and persecuted noble.

The virtuous resolution of Madame d'Urban was as much the subject of discussion in the circles of Avignon, as the misconduct of the chevalier had been the scandal of Paris; and for this reason he resolved to undertake her conquest. Every opportunity was indeed placed within his power, for, relying fully upon the virtue of his wife, M. d'Urban allowed her the most unfettered liberty of action. It is unnecessary to detail the event: he was successful, and publicly proclaimed the result to the dissolute society of Avignon. A murder, of which in his hours of drunken revelry he was the cause, and also its chief accomplice, so excited the anger of the vice-legate, that yielding alone to the consideration due to the Cardinal de Bouillon, he permitted his withdrawal from the city. This adventure, and his subsequent conduct, so provoked his relations, that they resolved to solicit a lettre de cachet from the king. The individual charged, however, to undertake this mission, whether from want of the requisite activity, or influenced by Madame d'Urban, so neglected the affair, that no information could be obtained of the result of his proceedings.

In the mean time Madame d'Urban, who had retired to the house of her aunt, opened a conciliatory intercourse with her husband, which was attended with the happiest success; and she returned home one month after the circumstances now related.

Two hundred pistoles, given by the Cardinal de Bouillon, appeased the relatives of the unfortunate pastrycook, who had died from the drunken cruelties of his nephew; and as the statement they put forth exonerated the chevalier at the same time in the mind of the king, he was enabled, after a residence of two years in Italy and Germany, to return without risk to France.

Thus ended not only the family de Ganges, but also the attention they had excited. From time to time the dramatists or romancists have reproduced the events, and disinterred the pale and bleeding form of the marchioness to appear upon the scene, or in their books; but to this the invocation has hitherto been limited; and many who have written about her, have been entirely ignorant of the fate of her children. It has been my wish to supply this deficiency; this has been the inducement to relate what others have omitted, and to offer to my readers what the theatre presents, and not unfrequently the world—the comedy after the tragic drama.

KARL LUDWIG SAND.

On the 22d of March, 1819, about nine o'clock in the morning, a young man of twenty-three or twenty-four years of age, dressed in the costume of a German student, which consisted of a short surtout, a silk waistcoat, pantaloons, and boots coming above the calf of the leg, stopped on a little height, situated about three quarters of the way from Kaiserthal to Manheim, and from the top of which was discovered the latter town, rising calm and peaceful in the midst of the gardens, which were formerly ramparts, and which now envelope it like a girdle of leaves and foliage. Arrived there, he raised his cap, on the front of which were enlaced three oak-leaves, embroidered in silver, and uncovering his face, he remained an instant with bare head to breathe the fresh air which rose from the valley of the Neckar. At first his irregular features made a strange impression; but soon, through the paleness of his visage, strongly marked with the smallpox, the sweetness of his eyes, and the elegant flow of his long black hair, surmounting a broad, lofty forehead, he excited a melancholy and involuntary sympathy. Although it was still so early, he appeared to have had a long journey, for his boots were covered with dust; but he seemed to have almost reached his destination, for letting fall his cap, and hanging to his girdle the long pipe,—that inseparable friend of the German student,—he drew a little memorandum-book from his pocket, and wrote in it with a pencil—"Left Wenheim at five in the morning, and arrived in sight of Manheim at a quarter after nine. God help me!" Then, putting his book back in his pocket, he remained an instant quite still, moving his lips as if engaged in mental prayer. He then picked up his cap, and took with a firm step the road towards Manheim.

This young student was Karl Ludwig Sand, who had arrived from Jena by the road from Frankfort and Darmstadt, to assassinate Kotzebue.

Meanwhile, as we are going to place before the eyes of our readers one of those terrible actions, for the appreciation of which there is no other real judge than conscience, we must make ourselves entirely acquainted with him, whom kings have regarded as an assassin, judges as an *illuminé*, and young Germany as a martyr.

Karl Ludwig Sand was born the 5th of October, 1797, at Wonsiedel, in the mountains of Fichtel. He was the youngest son of Godfrey Christopher Sand, first president and councillor of justice of the King of Prussia, and of Dorothy Joan Wilhelmina Schapf, his wife. Besides two elder brothers, George, who carried on the business of a merchant at Saint-Gall, and Fritz, who was an advocate at the court of appeal at Berlin, he had an elder sister, who was called Caroline, and a younger one named Julia. When still in the cradle, he had been attacked by smallpox of the most malignant species. The virus spread over all his body, laid his ribs bare, and almost destroyed his skull; for several months he struggled between life and death; at last life prevailed. Nevertheless, he remained feeble and sickly till his seventh year, when he was attacked by a dreadful fever, which again placed his life in danger. In compensation, however, this fever, in quitting him, appeared to have carried with it all vestiges of his former malady.

From this moment he became strong and healthy; but during his two long illnesses, his education had been very backward; and it was only at the age of eight, that he commenced his first studies; and, as his physical sufferings had retarded the development of his intellectual qualities, it was necessary for him at once to apply himself twice as much as others, to arrive at the same result.

Observing efforts which, quite a child, the young Sand made to conquer the defects of his education, Professor Salpanck, a man of knowledge and distinction, master of the Gymnasium of Hof, conceived a great friendship for him; and having been afterwards appointed director of the Gymnasium of Regensburg, he could not part with his pupil, and took him with him. It was in this town, at the age of eleven, that the first proof was given of his courage and humanity. One day, while walking with some young friends, he heard a cry for succour. A little boy, of eight or nine years old, had fallen into a pond; immediately Sand, without paying attention to his fine holiday suit, of which he took much care, threw himself into the water, and, after astonishing efforts for a child of his age, succeeded in drawing to land the drowning boy.

At the age of twelve or thirteen Sand, who had become more active, clever, and determined than many who were older than himself, often amused himself by fighting with the young boys of the town and the neighbouring villages. The scene of these childish combats, a faint and innocent resemblance of those great battles which at this period deluged Germany with blood, was generally a plain which reached from the village of Wonsiedel to the hill of Saint Catherine, at the summit of which were some ruins, and among these ruins a tower perfectly entire. Sand, who was one of the most ardent of the juvenile soldiers, seeing that his side had often been beaten because of their numerical weakness, resolved to obviate this inconvenience, by fortifying the tower of St. Catherine, and to retire to it from the next battle, if fortune went against him. He communicated this project to his comrades, who received it with enthusiasm. In consequence they passed a week in amassing in the tower all the means of possible defence, and in repairing the gates and stairs. These preparations were made with so much secrecy, that the hostile army had not the least knowledge of them.

The Sunday came; the holidays were the days of battle. Either from shame of having been beaten the last time, or from some other cause, the party to which Sand belonged found itself weaker than usual. Notwithstanding, reassured by the means of retreat, it did not hesitate to accept the combat. The shock did not last long; the disparity of numbers was too great. Sand's party therefore began to retreat in the best order possible, towards the tower of St. Catherine, where it arrived without having suffered much damage. Arrived there, some immediately mounted the terraces, and, while the others defended themselves at the bottom of the walls, began to throw stones on the enemy. They, astonished by this new mode of defence, recoiled some steps, and the rest of the troop profited by this opportunity to enter the fortress and shut the gate.

Great was the astonishment on the part of the besiegers: they had always seen this gate of no use, and suddenly it opposed to them a resistance, which sheltered the besieged from their assaults. Three or four detached themselves to go and seek for implements with which they might force it; during this time, the remainder of the hostile army held the garrison in blockade.

In about half an hour the envoys returned, not only with levers and pickaxes, but also with a considerable reinforcement, composed of young gentlemen of the village where they had gone to seek their instruments of war. Then the assault commenced. Sand and his companions defended themselves desperately; but it was soon evident that, unless succour arrived, the garrison would be forced to capitulate. They proposed to draw lots, and to detach one of their number, who, in spite of the peril, should issue from the tower, cross the best way he could the hostile army, and make an appeal to the other young men of Wonsiedel who had lazily remained at home; the recital of the peril which their comrades were in, the shame of a surrender, which would fall on them all, would evidently overcome their apathy, and determine them to make a diversion which would permit the garrison to attempt a sally. This advice was adopted; but, in place of leaving the decision to chance, Sand proposed himself for the enterprise. As every one knew his courage, his address, and his activity, the proposition was accepted by unanimous consent, and this new Decius prepared to do his duty.

The affair was not without danger. There were only two means of outlet; the one by the gate would evidently throw him into the hands of the enemy; the other was by leaping from the top to the bottom of a terrace, too high for the besiegers to have taken any care to watch. Sand, without hesitating an instant, went to the terrace; always religious, even in his childish sport, he uttered a short prayer, and, without hesitation, leapt from the terrace to the ground, a height of twenty-two feet.

He darted off immediately towards Wonsiedel, and arrived there, although the enemy had despatched after him their best runners; then the besieged, seeing the success of their enterprise, took courage, and reunited their efforts against the besiegers, relying on the eloquence of Sand, to whom it gave great ascendancy over his young companions. At the end of half an hour they saw him reappear, at the head of a band of thirty boys, of his own age, armed with slings and cross-bows. The besiegers, on the point of being attacked in front and rear, saw the disadvantage of their position, and retired; victory remained with Sand's party, and he had all the honours of the field.

We have related this anecdote in detail, to make our readers comprehend by the character of the child, what would afterwards become that of the man; we shall see it develope itself, always calm and superior, in the midst of small, as well as great events.

About the same time, Sand escaped, almost miraculously, from two dangers. One day, a great vessel full of plaster fell from a scaffolding, and broke at his feet; another day, the Prince of Coburg, who, while the King of Prussia was at the baths of Alexander, lodged with Sand's parents, driving at the gallop in a carriage and four, came upon young Sand under a gateway. He could not run either to the right or the left, without running the risk of being crushed between the wall and the wheels, while the coachman could not stop his horses; Sand threw himself flat on his belly, and the carriage passed over his body, without either the horses or the wheels giving him a single scratch. From this moment many regarded him as predestined, and said the hand of God was upon him.

Meanwhile, the political events that were occurring around the child, from their momentous character, made him a young man before his time. Napoleon pressed upon Germany, like another Sennacherib; Staps had wished to play the part of Mucius Scevola, and had died a martyr.

Sand was then at Hof, in the seminary of his good professor Salpanck. He learnt that the man, whom he regarded as antichrist, was to have a review in this town; he quitted it immediately, and went home to his parents; they asked him why he had left the seminary.

"Because," answered he, "I could not be in the same town with Napoleon without attempting to kill him, and I do not yet feel myself strong enough for that."

This happened in 1809; Sand was then fourteen.

The peace, signed on the 15th October, gave some ease to Germany, and permitted our young fanatic to resume his studies, without being disturbed by his political prepossessions. He was thus occupied in 1811, when he learnt that the seminary was dissolved, and replaced by a primary school; the master, Salpanck, remained attached to it as professor, but in place of the thousand florins, which his old situation brought him, the new one was only worth five hundred. Sand could not remain in a primary school, where he could not continue his education; he wrote to his mother to make known this event, and told her with what equanimity the old German philosopher had supported it. The following is her answer; it will show the character of this woman, whose powerful mind was never inconsistent, even in the greatest afflictions; it is impressed with that German mysticism of which, in France, we have no idea.

"My dear Karl,—You could not give me more painful news than an event which presses so heavily on your professor and adopted father; nevertheless, however calamitous it may be, he will doubtless resign himself to it, to give his pupils a great example of the submission which every subject owes to the king whom God has placed over him. And also, be well convinced, that there is in the world no other sound political principle than that which springs from the ancient precept: 'Respect God, be just, and fear no one.' And think also, that where injustice is flagrant against the just, the public voice will make itself heard, and raise up those who are oppressed. But if, against all probability, this should not happen; if God should impose on the virtue of our friend this sublime trial; if the world should forget him, and leave him to the justice of Providence, it has, even for this case, full compensation. Every thing, and every event, around and above us, are only the machines put in movement by a higher hand, in order to complete our education for a better world, in which alone we shall take our true place. Be careful, then, my dear child, to watch without ceasing, in order that you may not mistake single good and great actions for real virtue; and that you may be ready to do, at any time, all that your duty demands of you. At bottom, nothing is great or little, when we regard single cases, separated from each other; it is the union of the whole which alone produces unity of evil or of good. Besides, God sends trials to the heart only to which he has given strength; and the manner in which you tell me that your professor has supported the misfortune that has happened to him, is a new proof of that great and eternal truth. Take your model from him, my dear son, and if you must quit Hof for Bamberg, resign yourself to it with courage. There are three educations for man: that which he receives from his parents, that which circumstances impose on him, and lastly, that which he gives to himself. If this misfortune should happen, pray to God, to be able to complete worthily for yourself this last education, the most important of all. I will also give you, as an example, the life and conduct of my father, of whom you have heard little, for he died before you were born, but whose mind and likeness are revived only in you, among all your brothers and sisters. The unfortunate fire which reduced his native village to ashes, ruined his fortune and that of his parents. Grief for the loss of his all brought his father to the grave, and while his mother, struggling at once with sorrow and disease, maintained, in the intervals of her sufferings, three little daughters by the labour of her hands, he entered as a simple clerk into one of the greatest mercantile houses of Augsburg, where his spirit and steadiness of character were well appreciated. He learned there a business to which he was not born, and returned to his paternal dwelling, pure and uncorrupted, to be the support of his mother and sisters. Man can do much when he desires to do much: join your efforts to my prayers, and leave the rest in the hands of God."

The pious prediction was fulfilled. A short time afterwards, the rector Salpanck was named professor at Richemburg, whither Sand accompanied him. It was there that he began to be involved in the events of 1813. In the month of March he wrote to his mother:

"I can hardly tell you, my dear mother, how calm and happy I now begin to feel, since I am permitted to believe in the freedom of my country, which, I hear from every quarter, is so near; of that country, which, in my trust in God, I foresee free and powerful, and for whose good I would bear the greatest ills, even death itself. Summon courage for this crisis. Should it happen to reach our good province, raise your eyes towards the Almighty, and then turn them towards the beauty and richness of nature. The goodness of God, which saved and protected so many men during the disastrous thirty years' war, can, and will do now, what it was able and willing to do then. As for me, I hope and I believe."

Leipsic appeared to justify the presentiment of Sand. Then came the year 1814, and he believed Germany free. On the 10th December, of this year, he quitted Richemburg, with the following testimony from his professors:

"Karl Sand is among the small number of those young men who distinguish themselves at once by the gifts of the mind and the faculties of the heart; in application and industry he surpassed all his fellow pupils, which explains his rapid and profound progress in all the philosophical and philological sciences; in mathematics only he still requires some further study. The most affectionate wishes of his professors accompany him on his departure — J. A. Keyn, Rector and Professor of the first Class. Richemburg, 15th September, 1814."

But it was really the parents, and above all the mother, of Sand who had prepared this fertile soil in which the professors had sown the seeds of knowledge. Sand knew it well; for, at the moment of setting out for the university of Tübingen, where he was going to complete the theological studies necessary for the profession of a clergyman, he wrote them:

"I confess that I owe to you, as well as all my brothers and sisters, that important part of my education, in which I have seen that the greater part of those around me were defective. Heaven alone can recompense you, by the conviction of having so nobly fulfilled your parental duties among so many others."

After having paid a visit to his brother at St. Gall, Sand arrived at Tübingen, whither the reputation of Eschenmaier had chiefly attracted him. He passed this winter quietly, without any other event happening to him than his being made a member of an association of Burschen, called the "Teutonia." The feast of Easter arrived, and with it the terrible news that Napoleon had reappeared in France. Immediately every young German, able to carry arms, united, reassembled under the banners of 1813 and 1814. Sand followed the general example; only the action that was in others the effect of enthusiasm, was in him the result of a calm and reflective resolution.

On this occasion he wrote to Wonsiedel:

"22nd April, 1815.—My dear parents, until now you have found me obedient to your paternal lessons, and to the counsels of my excellent professors; until now I have endeavoured to be worthy of the education which God has sent me through you, to be capable of spreading in my country the word of God. I can now, therefore, sincerely make known to you the part I have taken, certain that, as tender and affectionate parents, you will tranquillize yourselves, and, as Germans and patriotic parents, you will the more praise my resolution, and not seek to dissuade me from it. My country again calls for aid, and now this appeal addresses itself also to me, for now I have strength and courage; and I was obliged, believe me, to make a great internal struggle with myself to refrain, when, in 1813, her cry first sounded in my ear, and the conviction, that thousands of others would combat and triumph for the good of Germany, while it was my duty to live for the peaceful calling to which I was destined, alone retained me. Now we must preserve our newly-established liberty. The almighty and merciful God reserves for us still this great trial, which will be certainly the last: it is for us, then, to show that we are worthy of the precious gift he has given us, and that we are capable of maintaining it with strength and firmness.

"The danger of the country has never been so great as now; wherefore, among the young Germans, the strong should sustain the wavering, in order that we may all rise together. Already our brave brothers in the north assemble from all parts under their banners. The state of Wurtemberg proclaims a general levy, and on all sides volunteers arrive, who demand leave to die for their country. I also consider it a duty to fight for my country, and for all those I love. If I were not profoundly convinced of this truth, I would not have imparted to you my resolution; but our family have German hearts, and would consider me a base and unworthy son, if I did not follow this impulse. I certainly feel the greatness of the sacrifice; believe me, it costs me much to quit my noble studies, to place myself under the orders of coarse and uneducated men; but still this sacrifice augments my courage to go and ensure the liberty of my fellow-countrymen; and besides, their liberty once assured, I shall, if God permit, return to be the bearer of his word.

"I take leave of you now for a time, my honoured parents, of my brothers, sisters, and all that are dear to me; as, after serious deliberation, it appears to me most proper to serve with the Bavarians. I am going to enlist, while the war lasts, in a company of tirailleurs of that nation. Adieu then, be happy; however far I may be from you, I will follow your pious exhortations. In this new path I will remain, I trust, pure before God, and I will endeavour always to walk in the path that raises us above the things of the earth, and conducts to those of heaven; and perhaps, in this career, the high pleasure of saving some souls from perdition is reserved for me. Your image will be incessantly before me; I desire to have God always before my eyes, and in my heart, to be able to sustain with joy the pain and fatigue of this holy war. Remember me in your prayers; God will send you the hope of better times to help you to support the unfortunate situation in which we are. We shall soon return if we are conquerors, and if we are vanquished (which God forbid), then my last wish, which I pray—which I conjure you to accomplish—my last and highest wish, will be, that you, my dear and worthy German parents, will quit an enslaved country for some other, in which freedom may still be found.

"But why should we thus make each other sad? Have we not a just and holy cause, and is not God just and holy? Why, then, should we not be conquerors? You see that sometimes I doubt; so, in your letters, which I impatiently expect, have pity on me, and do not discourage my mind; for, in any case, we can always betake ourselves to another country, in which we may be free and happy. I am, till death, your obedient and grateful son—KARL SAND."

It was with this farewell to his parents that Sand abandoned his books; and on the 10th of May, we find him among the volunteer chasseurs, inrolled under the command of Major Falkenhausen, who was then at Manheim. He there found his second brother, who had already preceded him, and they learned together all the exercises of a soldier.

Although Sand was not fitted for great bodily fatigue, he supported that of the campaign with marvellous strength, refusing every alleviation his superiors offered him; for he wished that no one should surpass him in exertion for the good of his country; and during the whole route he fraternally shared what he possessed with his comrades, helping those who were weaker than himself, by carrying their baggage; and, at once priest and soldier, sustaining them by religious consolation, when he was unable to do any thing else.

On the 18th of June, at eight o'clock in the evening, he arrived on the field of battle of Waterloo. On the 14th of July he entered Paris.

On the 18th of December, 1815, Karl and his brother returned to Wonsiedel, to the great joy of their family. He enjoyed among them the festivities of Christmas and new year; but his ardour, which he had for his new vocation, would not permit him to remain there long, and on the 7th of January he arrived at Erlangen. It was then that, to recover lost time, he resolved to subject his day to fixed and uniform rules, and to write every evening what he had done since the morning. It is by the help of this diary that we can follow the young enthusiast, not only in every action of his life, but in every thought of his mind, and every hesitation of his conscience. He is there in every feature, simple even to naïveté, high-minded even to extravagance, indulgent to others even to weakness, severe to himself even to sternness. One of his greatest griefs was the expense which his education cost his parents, and every unnecessary and expensive pleasure left remorse in his heart.

Thus, on the 9th of February, he writes:

"I reckoned to-day on visiting my parents. I went, in consequence, to the house of business, and there I amused myself much. N. and T. then began their eternal jokes about Wonsiedel, that lasted till eleven o'clock. But at last N. and T. began to teaze me to go to a tavern; I refused as long as it was possible; but as they seemed at last to believe that it was owing to pride that I would not go and drink a bottle of Rhenish wine with them, I dared not longer resist. Unfortunately they did not stop at the Braunberger; and as I had still my glass half full, N. ordered a bottle of champagne. When the first had disappeared, T. ordered a second; and then, even before this second was finished, both insisted on having a third from me, and in spite of me. I came home quite stupified: I threw myself on the sofa, where I slept nearly an hour, and then went to bed.

"Thus passed this shameful day, when I forgot my good and worthy parents, who live a poor and troubled life; and when I allowed myself to be drawn, by the example of those who have money, to spend four florins, an expense which was useless, and on which all my family would have lived for two days. Pardon me, my God; pardon me, I beseech thee, and receive the vow, that I will never again fall into the like fault. I will henceforth live even more soberly than I have been accustomed to do, to retrieve in my poor finances the shameful effect of my prodigality, and not to be forced to ask my mother for more money before the day when she will herself send it me of her own accord."

At the same time that the poor young man reproached himself with a crime of having spent four florins, one of his cousins, a widow, died, leaving three orphan children. He hastened to give the first consolations to the unfortunate little ones; besought his mother to take charge of the youngest; and, quite joyful at her answer, he thus thanked her:

"For the joy that you have caused me by your letter, and for the way in which you speak to me, God bless you, my dearest mother. As I had hoped and believed you would do, you have taken the little Julia; and I am the more grateful to you for it, as I had made my poor cousin, in her lifetime, the promise which you now perform for me after her death."

Towards the end of March, Sand, without being positively ill, felt an indisposition which forced him to go to a watering-place. His mother was then at the forges of Redwitz, near Wonsiedel, where there are mineral waters. Sand went to live at the forges with his mother; and in spite of his desire not to interrupt his studies, the time spent in taking the baths, the walks which his health required, and invitations to dinner, deranged the habitual regularity of his life, and gave him some compunction. Thus we find these lines written in his journal, dated the 13th April:—

"Life, without some high aim, on which all our thoughts and actions are bent, is void and barren: the way I have spent to-day is a proof of it. I have passed it with my family, and that has doubtless given me a great pleasure; but how have I passed it? In nothing but eating; so that when I wanted to work I was unfit for it. Languid and listless I have dragged myself this evening into two or three parties, and left them with the same disposition as I entered them."

For these excursions Sand made use of a pony belonging to his brother, which he was very fond of. This little animal had been bought with much difficulty, for, as we have said, all the family were poor. The following note, which relates to it, will give an idea of Sand's simplicity of heart :—

"19th April. To-day I have been very happy at the forge, and very laborious, beside my dear mother. In the evening I returned home with the little pony. Since the day before yesterday, when he stumbled and hurt one of his feet, he has been very restive and ill-tempered. When we came home he refused to eat: I believed at first that his food had not agreed with him, and I gave him some bits of sugar and some sticks of cinnamon, which he is very fond of; he tasted, but would not eat them. The poor little animal appears to have, besides his hurt foot, some other inward complaint. If he should unfortunately become lame or ill, every body, and even my parents, will throw the blame on me, though I have been very careful of him, and fed him well. My God! who orderest great things as well as small, remove this misfortune from me, and heal him as promptly as possible. However, if thou hast ordered it otherwise, and if this new misfortune should fall upon us, I will endeavour to support it with courage, and as an expiation of some sin. For the rest, O God! I leave this in thy hands, where I leave my life and my soul."

The 20th April he wrote—

"The pony is well. God has helped me."

The German manners are so different from ours, and the contradictions in the same character are so frequent on the other side of the Rhine, that it required all the quotations we have made to give our readers a just idea of the mixture of *naïveté* and reason, of weakness and strength, of dejection and enthusiasm, of material details and poetical ideas, that make Sand incomprehensible to us. We shall continue the portrait, for the last touches are still wanting.

On his return to Erlangen, after a complete cure, Sand for the first time read Faust. The impression it produced may be gathered from his journal.

"4th May. Oh the frightful struggle between the man and the demon! That Mephistophiles is in me, I feel only now; and I feel it, O God, with terror!

"Towards eleven o'clock at night I finished reading this tragedy. I saw and felt the demon within me, and looked with terror and despair into the darkness of my own heart."

Meanwhile Sand fell by degrees into a deep melancholy, from which he was diverted only by his desire of refining and reforming the students who surrounded him. To any one acquainted with life at the universities, such a task would appear superhuman. Nevertheless Sand did not despond; and if he had not influence upon all, he had at least formed round him a considerable circle, composed of the best and most intelligent of his fellows. Still, in the midst of his apostolical labours, strange desires of death seized him: he appeared to remember heaven, and to desire to return thither as to the land of his nativity. He called these temptations the *home-sickness* of the soul.

His favourite authors were Lessing, Schiller, Herder, and Goethe; after having read the two last for the twentieth time, he wrote thus:—

"Good and evil are close together. The griefs of the young Werther and the seduction of Weisslingen are almost the same story. No matter; we ought not to judge of what is good or what is evil in others, for that is the province of God. I have passed much time in this reflection, and I am convinced that in no circumstance ought we to seek for the devil in our neighbour, whom we have not the right of judging. The only creature over whom we have the power of judgment and condemnation, is ourself; and that brings us enough of care and trouble.

"I have felt again to-day a desire to leave this world and enter into a higher; but this desire was weakness rather than strength, weariness rather than enthusiasm."

The year 1816 glided away in these pious attempts to improve his young companions, in this constant examination of himself, and in a perpetual struggle against the desire of death which haunted him. Every day he was more distrustful of himself; and on the 1st January, 1817, we find this prayer in his journal:

"Grant me, God, to whom thou hast given free will, in sending me into the world, the grace that, during the year we are entering on, I may never relax in this constant attention to myself, and that I may not shamefully abandon this examination of my conscience, which I have made till now; give me strength to augment the watch that I keep on myself, and to diminish that which I have on others. Increase my strength of will so that it may be powerful enough to control the desires of the body, and the wanderings of the mind. Give me a conscience piously devoted to thy heavenly kingdom, so that I may always belong to thee, or that, after having failed, I may still return to thee."

Sand was right in praying to God for this year, 1817: his fears were a presentiment. The horizon of Germany, cleared by Leipsic and Waterloo, had again become gloomy. To the colossal and universal despotism of Napoleon had succeeded the individual oppression of those petty princes who form the German diet: and all that the people had gained by overthrowing the giant, was to be ruled by dwarfs.

It was then that the secret societies organized themselves over all Germany: let us bestow a few words on them; for the history we are writing is not only that of individuals, but also that of nations, and as often as occasion offers, we shall give a wide background to our little picture.

The secret societies of Germany, of which we have heard so much without being acquainted with them, seemed to have originated in a kind of affiliation to those celebrated clubs of *illuminés* and freemasons, which made so much noise in France towards the end of the eighteenth century. At the time of the revolution of 1789, these different philosophical, political, and religious sects, accepted with enthusiasm the republican propagandism, and the successes of our first generals have been attributed to the secret efforts of these societies.

When Buonaparte, who had been acquainted with them, and had even, it is said, been a member of them, exchanged his general's uniform for the imperial mantle, all these sects, who regarded him as a renegade and a traitor, not only rose up against him at home, but even sought to make him enemies abroad. As they addressed themselves to the noble and generous passions, they found a ready echo, and princes who might profit by their results, appeared for an instant to encourage them; Prince Louis of Prussia, among others, was grand master of one of these societies.

The attempt at assassination by Staps, which we have already mentioned, was one of the explosions of this storm; but the peace of Vienna immediately followed: the abasement of Austria completed the dissolution of the Germanic body. Already mortally stricken in 1806, and watched by the French police, these societies, in place of continuing to organise themselves publicly, were forced to recruit themselves in secret.

In 1811 several agents of these societies were arrested at Berlin, but the Prussian authorities protected them by the secret orders of Queen Louisa; so that it was easy for them to deceive the French police as to their intentions.

Towards February, 1813, the disasters of the French army re-animated the courage of these societies, for it seemed plain that God aided their cause. The students especially took part with enthusiasm in their new attempts; entire schools enrolled themselves with emulation, choosing for officers their masters and professors. The poet Kœrner, killed on the 18th of October at Leipsic, was the hero of this campaign.

The triumph of this national movement, which twice led to the gates of Paris the Prussian army, of which a large portion was composed of volunteers, had, since the treaties of 1815, and the new Germanic constitution were known, a terrible reaction on Germany. All the young men, who, excited by their princes, had risen in the name of liberty, soon perceived that they were the instruments employed by European despotism to strengthen itself; they wished to claim the promises they had received; but the policy of Talleyrand and Metternich pressed them down, and forced them to hide their discontent and their hopes in the universities: which, enjoying a kind of constitution of their own, escaped more easily the investigation of the spies of the holy alliance.

Kept under, however, as they were, these societies did not the less exist, corresponding among themselves by means of travelling students, who, charged with verbal missions, traversed Germany under pretence of botanizing, and, passing from mountain to mountain, kept alive among the people the spirit of freedom which durst no longer manifest itself.

We have seen that Sand, carried away by the general movement, had served as a volunteer in the campaign of 1815, although only nineteen years of age. On his return he had been disappointed, like others, in his golden hopes; and we now see his journal take the character of melancholy mysticism, which our readers have already remarked in it. Soon afterwards he entered into one of those associations, the Teutonia, and it was from this moment, that, regarding with religious zeal the great cause he had embraced, he essayed to make the agents worthy of the enterprise. Hence his attempt at moral reformation, which succeeded with some, but miscarried with the greater number.

Meanwhile Sand was endeavouring to form around him a circle of puritans, composed of from sixty to eighty students, all belonging to the sect of the *Burschenchaft*, which, in spite of the ridicule of the opposite sect, the *Landmanschaft*, pursued its political and religious path. One of his friends, named Ditmar, and he, were in a great measure its chiefs; and although no election had conferred on them this authority, the influence that they exercised on the deliberations of the body was a proof that, in a given circumstance, any impulse which they might communicate would be spontaneously obeyed. The meetings of the *Burschen* took place on a little hill, surmounted by an old castle, near Erlangen, which Sand and Ditmar had called the Rutli, in memory of the place where Walter

Furst, Melchtall and Stauffacher swore to deliver their country. They met under the pretext of joining in students' games; and occupied themselves in rebuilding a new house out of the rubbish of the old ruin: a secret symbol of the object of their meetings.

The association made such great progress over all Germany, that not only the princes and kings of the German confederation began to be alarmed, but even the great European powers. France sent agents to make reports of what they could discover; Russia paid persons on the spot for similar services; and often the persecutions which reached a professor, and exasperated a whole university, were in consequence of a note from the cabinet of the Tuileries or St. Petersburg.

It was in the midst of these events that Sand, after having placed himself under the protection of God, began the year 1817 in the melancholy spirit which we have already described. On the 8th May, overcome by the melancholy arising from the failure of all his political hopes, he wrote in his journal:

"I cannot go seriously to work; and this idle disposition, this hypochondriac humour, which throws its dark shadows on every object of life, continues and increases, notwithstanding the moral effort which I made yesterday."

At the time of the vacation, for fear of burthening his parents by an increase of expense, he did not go home to them, but took a pedestrian journey with some of his friends. Doubtless this journey, besides amusement, had its political object. Be that as it may, Sand's journal merely contained, during the whole time of the excursion, the names of the towns he passed through. To give an idea of his submission to his parents, it may be added, that he did not begin his journey until he had obtained his mother's consent.

On their return, Sand, Ditmar, and their friends the *Burschen*, found their Rutli plundered by their enemies of the *Landmanschaft;* the house that they had built was demolished, and the materials dispersed. Sand took this event as a presage, and was deeply affected by it—

"It appears to me, O my God!" said he, in his journal, "that all things about me whirl round and round in confusion. I become sadder and sadder; my moral strength, in place of increasing, diminishes. I labour and cannot accomplish; I wear myself out and do nothing great. The days of life fly away one after another; my anxiety and uneasiness increase; I perceive nowhere a harbour which will receive our holy German cause. At last we shall fall; for my feet fail me already. O Lord and Father! protect and save me!"

About this time, a terrible event struck Sand to the heart; his friend Ditmar was drowned. On the morning of the day on which this calamity happened, he wrote in his journal,—

"O Almighty God! what is to become of me? For fourteen days my mind has been confused, and unable to look forwards or backwards; so that from the 4th of June to this hour my journal has remained a blank. I might, however, have had occasion every day to praise you, O my God! but my soul is in anguish. Lord, do not turn away from me; the greater the obstacle, the more occasion for strength."

The following letter to his family contains the account of this tragical event:

"You know that since my best friends, U. C. & Z., were gone, I have particularly attached myself to my beloved friend, Ditmar of Anspach; Ditmar, a true and worthy German, an evangelical Christian, pure, virtuous, and full of active benevolence. He occupied, in the house of Professor Grunler, a room adjoining mine; we loved each other, we sustained each other in our efforts, and we bore in common the same good or evil fortune. On this, the last evening of spring, after having been occupied in his room, and strengthened each other against the ills of life, and in the pursuit of the object which we wished to attain, we went, about seven o'clock, to the bath of Redout. The sky appeared black and stormy; but, as yet, only on the horizon. E., who accompanied us, proposed to return; but Ditmar persisted, saying the canal was only a few steps off. God permitted that it was not I who made this fatal remark. We went on: the sunset was splendid; I think I see it still, with its violet clouds, fringed with gold; for I remember the minutest circumstances of this dreadful evening.

"Ditmar first went into the water; he was the only one of us who could swim; so he went on before to show us the depth. We were nearly breast-high in water, and he, who preceded us, was up to the shoulders, when he cautioned us against going further, as he had lost his footing. As soon as he was out of his depth, he began to swim; but hardly had he gone ten fathoms, and had only arrived at the place where the river separates into two branches, when he uttered a cry, and, wishing to regain his footing, disappeared. We ran immediately to the bank, hoping to succour him more easily from thence; but we had neither poles nor ropes, and, as I have told you, neither of us could swim. We then called for help with all our strength. At this moment, Ditmar reappeared, and by an incredible effort, seized the branch of a willow tree, which hung over the water; but the branch had not strength enough to resist, and our friend again sunk, as if he had been struck down. Figure to yourself the state we were in; we, his friends, bending over the river, trying, with straining eyes, to pierce the depth of its waters. O my God! how is it that we did not lose our senses?

"By this time a great multitude had been attracted by our cries. For two hours they searched for him with boats and hooks; at last they drew his body from the bottom. Yesterday we solemnly conveyed him to his place of rest.

"Thus, with the close of this spring, has commenced the serious summer of my life. I have welcomed it in a grave and melancholy spirit, and you now see me, if not consoled, at least supported by religion, which, thanks to the merits of Christ, gives me the assurance of again meeting my friend in heaven, from whence he will inspire me with strength to support the trials of this life; and now my only desire is to know that you are free from uneasiness about me."

In place of this accident reuniting, by a common feeling, the two sects of students, it only served to envenom their mutual hatred. Among the first who were attracted by the cries of Sand and his comrades, was a member of the Landmanschaft, who could swim; but in place of rushing to the succour of Ditmar, he cried, "I think we are going to get rid of one of these scoundrelly Burschen; God be praised!"

In spite of this odious manifestation of feeling, which, after all, might have been that of an individual only, and not of a body, the Burschen invited their enemies to Ditmar's funeral. A rude refusal, and a threat to disturb the funeral, was their only answer. The Burschen anticipated the authorities, who also took their measures; and all the friends of Ditmar accompanied his body sword in hand. Seeing this calm but resolute demonstration, the Landmanschaft did not dare to execute their brutal threat, and contented themselves with insulting the procession by songs and laughter.

Sand wrote in his journal—

"Ditmar is a great loss to us all, and particularly to me: he gave me the surplus of his own strength and vitality; he arrested, as with a dike, what was floating and irresolute in my character. It is from him I have learnt not to dread the approaching storm, and to know how to combat and die."

Some days after the funeral, Sand had a quarrel, on account of Ditmar, with one of his old friends, who had gone over from the Burschen to the Landmanschaft, and who had, during the funeral, made himself remarkable by his ill-timed hilarity. It was arranged they should fight on the morrow; and this day Sand wrote in his journal—

"17th August. To-morrow I am to fight with P. G.; thou knowest, notwithstanding, O God, how, in spite of a certain mistrust with which his coldness has always inspired me, we have once been friends; but on this occasion his odious conduct has filled me with the deepest hatred. My God! judge between his cause and mine, and give victory to the most just. If thou callest me before thy supreme tribunal, I know well that I shall appear there loaded with an eternal curse; therefore it is not on myself I depend, but on the merits of our Saviour Jesus. Whatever may happen, I praise and bless thee, O my God! Amen. My dear parents, brothers, and friends, I recommend you to the protection of God."

Next day, Sand waited in vain for two hours; his adversary did not keep the appointment.

The loss of Ditmar was far from producing on Sand the result which might have been expected, and which he himself appeared to indicate by his manner of expressing his grief. Deprived of the strong mind on which he leant for support, Sand felt that he ought to render, by double energy, the death of Ditmar less fatal to his party. In fact, he continued alone the work that they had both pursued, and the progress of the patriotic conspiracy was not impeded for a moment.

The vacation arrived, and Sand quitted Erlangen never to return. From Wonsiedel he was to go to Jena, to continue his theological studies. After some days passed with his family, and mentioned in his journal as perfectly happy, Sand departed for his new residence, where he arrived some time before the festival of Wartzburg. This festival, which had been instituted to celebrate the anniversary of the battle of Leipsic, was regarded as a great solemnity all over Germany; and although the princes knew well that it was annually the central point of union for the Confederation, yet they did not venture to suppress it. In fact, the Teutonic Association was carried on in the midst of this festival, and signed by more than two thousand deputies from the different universities of Germany. This was a joyful day for Sand, for he found there, among new friends, a great many old ones.

Meanwhile, the government, which had not dared to attack the union by force, resolved to undermine it by opinion. M. de Stauren published a memoir denouncing the associations, which had been, it was said, drawn up from materials furnished by Kotzebue. This memoir made a great sensation, not only at Jena, but over all Germany. It was the first blow struck at the liberty of the students. This occurrence is thus noticed in Sand's journal:

"24th Nov. To-day, after having laboured with much care and assiduity, I went out about four o'clock in the afternoon with E. As we crossed the market-place, we heard the reading of Kotzebue's new and venomous insult; what rage possesses this man against the Burschen, and against every thing that loves Germany!"

This is the first time, and it is in these terms that Sand's journal mentions the name of the man, whom, eighteen months later, it was his destiny to assassinate.

On the evening of the 29th, Sand wrote again:

"To-morrow, I depart courageously and joyfully from hence, on a pilgrimage to Wonsiedel; there I shall find my high-minded mother and my sweet sister Julia; there I shall cool my head and warm my heart; probably I may be present at the marriage of my good Fritz with Louisa, and at the baptism of the first-born of my very dear Durchmith. God! my Father! as you have been with me in my sorrow, be with me still in my gladness."

Sand was much enlivened by his journey. Since Ditmar's death, his fits of hypochondriacism had disappeared; while Ditmar lived, he might have died; but Ditmar being dead, he felt that he must live.

On the 11th December, he quitted Wonsiedel, to return to Jena, and on the 31st of the same month he wrote this prayer in his journal:

"O merciful God! I began this year with prayer, but latterly my mind has been wandering and evil disposed. When I look back, I find, alas! that I have not become better, but I have entered more deeply into life; and when occasion shall offer, I now feel that I have strength to act; it is, because thou hast always been with me, Lord, even when I was not with thee."

If our readers have followed with any attention our different extracts from the journal, they have seen that Sand's resolution became stronger as his head became heated by the contemplation of his purpose. From the commencement of the year 1818, we see his looks, long timid and wandering, embrace a wider horizon, and fix themselves on a loftier object; it is no longer the simple life of a pastor, nor the petty influence which he might acquire in a little community,—things which had appeared to him, in his youthful modesty, the height of happiness and honour,—that he is now ambitious of; it is his country—his own German people, humanity at large, which he embraces in his gigantic plans of political regeneration.

Thus, upon the blank page of the binding of his journal, for the year 1818, he writes:

"Lord, let me strengthen myself in the idea that I have conceived of the deliverance of man, by the holy sacrifice of thy Son. Grant that I may become a saviour for Germany, and that, like and through Jesus, I may be strong and patient in the endurance of suffering."

In the mean time, the antirepublican pamphlets of Kotzebue multiplied, and had a fatal influence on the mind of the governing powers. Nearly every person attacked in these pamphlets, was known and esteemed in Jena; and we may comprehend what effect these insults produced on those young heads and noble hearts, who carried conviction even to blindness, and enthusiasm to fanaticism.

In this spirit, Sand wrote, on the 5th of May, in his journal:

"God! why this anxious melancholy which has again taken possession of me? But a firm and constant will surmounts every obstacle, and the idea of our country gives joy to the most melancholy,—courage to the most feeble. The more I reflect, the more I am astonished that there is not one to be found among us sufficiently courageous to plunge a knife into the throat of Kotzebue, or any other traitor!"

On the 18th of May, he continued thus:

"A man is nothing compared with a people; it is a unit compared with thousands; he is a minute compared with an age. Man is a fleeting shadow; a people is immortal."

Nevertheless, from time to time, even in the midst of these thoughts, impressed with the political fatalism which impelled him onwards to the bloody deed, the good-natured, and happy-tempered young man reappears.

On the 24th of June, he wrote to his mother:

"I have received your long and kind letter, accompanied by the complete and well-chosen packet of necessaries, which you have sent me. The sight of all this beautiful linen has made me as happy as I used to be when I was a child. I have got all at once a stock of shirts, two pairs of fine sheets, your work, and the work of Julia and Caroline, sweetmeats and nice things. I assure you, I jumped for joy when I opened the little packet. Receive my heartfelt thanks, and share, as the giver, the joy of the receiver.

"Still this is a serious day,—the last day of spring, the anniversary of that on which I lost my noble and good Ditmar. I am affected by a thousand confused feelings; but I have only two passions which remain firm, and, like pillars of brass, sustain all this chaos; they are the thoughts of God, and the love of my country."

During all this time the life of Sand remained apparently calm and even. The internal conflict is over; he is pleased with his own application to study, and his happy disposition; yet from time to time he complains of his propensity to childish dainties, which he cannot always overcome. In this humour, he calls himself a devourer of figs and sugarplums. But in the midst of all this, his religious and political excitement continued. He made with his friends a sort of propagandist tour to Leipsic, Wittemberg, and Berlin, and visited all the fields of battle which were near the road.

On the 18th of October he returned to Jena, where he resumed his studies with more application than ever. It was in the midst of these college labours that the year 1818 expired; and one could hardly, from his way of life, have suspected the terrible resolution he had taken, were it not for the following passage in his journal, written on the 31st of December:

"I thus conclude the last day of this year, 1818, in a serious and solemn disposition, and I have decided that the Christmas that has just glided away shall be the last Christmas I shall solemnize. If any thing should come of our efforts; if the cause of humanity should gain the ascendancy in our country; if, in the midst of this faithless age, some generous sentiment should revive, and find a place, it can only be when the wretched traitor, the seducer of youth, the infamous Kotzebue, shall have fallen. I am thoroughly convinced of this, and so long as I shall not have accomplished the work which I have resolved on, I shall never feel a moment's repose. Lord, thou who knowest that I have devoted my life to this great action, I have only, now that it is determined in my mind, to ask of thee true firmness and courage of soul."

Here Sand's journal closes; he had begun it to strengthen his resolution; this object attained, he cared for nothing else. From this moment he was solely occupied with this one idea, and he continued slowly to mature the plan in his mind, in order to familiarize himself with its execution; but every impression springing from this idea was inward, and nothing appeared on the surface. To every body about him he was the same, only for some time his friends remarked in him a perfect and uniform serenity of temper, and a more animated participation in the pursuits and pleasures of life. He made no change in the hours or duration of his lectures, only he attended with great assiduity the course of anatomy. One day he was observed to pay more than usual attention to a lecture, in which the professor demonstrated the different functions of the heart; he examined with the greatest care its exact position in the breast, getting some of the demonstrations repeated two or three times. On leaving the class-room he questioned some of the young medical students on the susceptibility of this organ, the slightest injury to which is followed by death; and all with an air of such calmness and indifference that no one about him entertained the slightest suspicion.

Another day, one of his friends came into his room; Sand, who had heard him coming up, waited for him standing against a table, with a paper-cutter in his hand. The moment he appeared, Sand rushed upon him, and gave him a slight stroke on the forehead, and when he lifted his hand to the place, struck him another blow, somewhat more violent, on the breast. While his friend was startled at this reception, Sand, as if satisfied with this experiment, said to him,

"If you want to kill a man, that is the way to do it; threaten his face; he puts his hands on it, and then you can plunge your dagger in his heart."

The young men made merry with this deadly demonstration, and in the evening Sand's friend told it at the *weinhaus* as one of his oddities. The meaning of the pantomime was soon explained.

The month of March arrived; Sand became every day more calm, affectionate, and amiable; it seemed as if, at the moment of quitting his friends for ever, he wished to leave them an indelible remembrance of him. At last he informed them, that, for several family matters, he was about to undertake a little journey; and began all his preparations with his habitual care, and with even more than his usual serenity. Until then he had continued his studies as usual, without relaxing an instant; for it was possible that Kotzebue might die, or be killed by another, before the time that Sand had fixed for himself, and in that case he did not wish to lose his time.

On the 7th of March, Sand invited all his friends to pass the evening with him, and announced to them his departure the next day but one, the 9th; they all proposed to him, to accompany him some leagues on his way, but Sand refused. He feared lest this demonstration, however innocent, should compromise them afterwards. He departed alone, after having, to remove all suspicion, hired anew his lodgings for six months; and went by Erfurth and Isenach, in order to visit Warzburg; from thence he went to Frankfort, where he slept on the 17th, and next day continued his journey by Darmstadt. At last, on the 23d, at nine in the morning, he arrived on the little hill, where we found him at the commencement of this history.

During all the journey he had been the good and joyous young man who gained the heart of every one that saw him.

When he arrived at Manheim, he lodged at the Weinberg, and entered himself in the register of travellers, under the name of Henry. He immediately informed himself where Kotzebue lived. The councillor's house was near the church of the Jesuits; it was a corner house; and he found it at once.

It was now about ten o'clock. He was told then that the councillor went out every morning, to walk for an hour or two in an alley of the park of Manheim. Sand asked a description of the alley and the councillor's dress; for, never having seen him, he could not have recognised him without this description. It chanced that Kotzebue had taken another alley. Sand walked an hour in the park; but seeing nobody to whom he could apply the description, he returned to the house. Kotzebue had come in, but was at breakfast and could not receive him. Sand returned to the Weinberg, and took his place at the table-d'hôte, where he dined in so calm and even so joyous a mood that every body was struck by his unaffected and lively conversation. At five o'clock in the afternoon he returned for the third time to Kotzebue's house, who had a large dinner-party that day, but had given orders to admit Sand. He was shown into a little cabinet adjoining the antechamber. In a few minutes Kotzebue appeared. Sand then acted the part which he had rehearsed on his friend. To protect his face, Kotzebue raised his hands and exposed his breast; Sand immediately stabbed him with his dagger to the heart. Kotzebue uttered one cry, and, staggering backwards, fell into a chair: he was dead.

At this cry, a little girl of six years old, a lively German child, with her cherub head, blue eyes, and long silken hair, ran into the room. She threw herself on Kotzebue's body, screaming, and calling wildly on her papa. Sand, standing at the door, could not bear the sight, and, without stirring from the spot, plunged into his own breast the dagger yet reeking with the blood of his victim. Finding that his wound was not mortal, and not wishing to fall alive into the hands of the servants, he threw himself down the staircase. At this moment some of the invited guests came in. Seeing a young man, pale and bloody, with a dagger in his breast, they uttered loud cries and ran away instead of arresting him. Sand reached the door, and got into the street. A few paces off he passed a patrol, which was going to relieve the castle-guard. Believing it to have been brought by the cries which followed him, he threw himself on his knees, in the middle of the street, exclaiming: "Father, receive my soul;" then, drawing the dagger from the wound, he gave himself a second blow, and fell senseless.

He was conveyed to the hospital, and closely watched. His wounds were dangerous but not mortal. The first was soon healed: but the other was of such a nature that, notwithstanding the most skilful treatment, Sand remained for three months in a state between life and death.

When the news of Kotzebue's murder arrived at Jena, the authorities of the university ordered Sand's apartment to be opened, and found two letters, the one addressed to his friends of the *Burschenschaft*, and in which he informed them, that he was no longer a member of their society, not wishing that they should have among them a man who was going to perish on the scaffold.

The other, which was addressed, "To my dearest and most intimate friends," contained an exact account of what he intended to do, and of the motives by which he was actuated. It is full of the patriotic fanaticism, ardent but mistaken sense of duty, loftiness of sentiment, and warmth of heart, which formed the elements of the writer's singular character.

Sand, who had been first taken to the hospital, was, at the end of three months, conveyed to the prison of Manheim. He remained there for five months in a state of extreme weakness; his left arm was completely paralyzed; his voice was almost gone; every movement that he made produced violent agony; so that it was not till the 11th of August, five months after the event which we have related, that he could write to his family the following letter:

"My very dear Parents,—The Grand Duke's judicial commission informed me yesterday, that I may possibly have the joy of a visit from you, and that I may perhaps see you and embrace you here,—you, my mother, and some of my brothers and sisters.

"Without being surprised at this new proof of your maternal love, this hope has again awaked in me the remembrance of the happy life we have passed all together. Joy and grief, desire on one hand and the necessity of sacrifice on the other, agitate my heart; and, I have had to exercise all my powers to reason in order to decide between them. The balance has turned in favour of sacrifice.

"You know, my mother, that the sight of your face, your daily society, your pious and elevated sentiments, would bring me joy and courage for the short time that remains to me. But you also know my situation, and you know too well the natural course of all these painful investigations, not to feel as I do, that such interruptions, renewed every minute, would greatly disturb the joy of our meeting, if not entirely destroy it. Then, my mother, after the long and fatiguing journey you would be obliged to undertake in order to see me, think of the agony of separation, when the moment comes that we must part for ever in this world. Let us then resolve to make this sacrifice, according to the will of God, and let us only indulge in that sweet community of thoughts that distance cannot interrupt, in which I place my only happiness, and which will be always, in man's despite, granted us by the Lord our Father.

"As to my physical condition, I know nothing of it. I know too little the structure of my own body to judge what may be the consequences of my wounds. Setting aside a little strength which I have regained, my situation remains the same, and I support it with calmness and patience, because God comes to my aid and gives me firmness and courage.—Your deeply respectful son, Karl Ludwig Sand. Manheim, 11th August, 1819."

A month after this letter, affectionate answers arrived from all his family. We shall only quote that of his mother, because it completes the idea which may have already been formed of this great-hearted woman, as her son always called her.

"Dear, unspeakably dear Karl,—How delightful it has been to me, after so long a time, to see your dear handwriting! No journey could be painful enough, no road long enough, to prevent my going to you, and I would go to the end of the earth, in the hope of only seeing you.

"But as I know well your tender affection and anxiety for me, and as you give me, with such firmness and reflection, reasons against which I have nothing to say, and which I can only honour, let it be, my dearly beloved Karl, as you desired and decided. Even in separation we shall commune in thought. Only be tranquil, nothing can separate us; I wrap you in my heart, and my maternal thoughts will be ever round you.

"May that infinite love, which sustains us, strengthen us and lead us to a better life. Preserve, my dear Karl, your courage and firmness. "Adieu! and be always convinced that I will never cease to love you tenderly and deeply."

Sand replied:

"January, 1820, from my Isle of Patmos. My dear Parents, Brothers and Sisters,—In the middle of last September, I received from the Grand Duke's special commission of inquest, of whose humanity you are already aware, your dear letters of the end of August and beginning of September; and they have had the magical influence of filling me with joy, by transporting me into the midst of your beloved circle. You, my dear father, you write me on your sixty-seventh birthday, and you bless me in the fulness of your tenderest love. You, my dearly beloved mother, you promise me the continuation of your maternal affection, on which I have in all times irremovably relied. I have received your blessing, which, in my present situation, is more to me than any thing that all the kings of the earth could bestow. Your love is my nourishment and support; and I thank you for it, my dear parents, with the respectful submission with which my heart will ever inspire me, as the first duty of a son.

"But the greater your love, the more affectionate your letters, the greater, I must confess, are my sufferings from the voluntary sacrifice we have made in not seeing each other; and I have been thus long in replying to you, my dear parents, only to give myself time to recover the fortitude I had lost.

"You, also, dear brother-in-law and dear sister, assure me of your sincere and uninterrupted attachment. And yet, after the terror I have given you all, you appear not to know exactly what you should think of me. But my heart, full of gratitude for your past kindness, reassures itself; for your actions speak, and tell me, that even if you did not wish any longer to love me as I love you, you could not do otherwise. These actions are worth more to me at this moment, than the strongest protestations or the most tender words. And you also, my good brother, you would have consented to hasten with our beloved mother to the banks of the Rhine: here, where the true affinity of the soul was first established between us, where we were twice brothers.* But do I not feel that you are here in soul and spirit, when I consider the rich source of consolation which your cordial and tender letter has brought me? And you, my good sister-in-law, you have ever been a real sister to me; and so you are to this hour. Your tender and sisterly affection is always the same. Your consolations, flowing from profound and submissive piety, have fallen refreshingly upon my heart. But, my good sister-in-law, I must say to you, as to the rest, that you are too liberal towards me in the dispensation of your esteem and your praises; your exaggeration has thrown me back upon my inward judge, who gives me, in the mirror of my conscience, the view of all my faults.

"For you, my dear Julia, all your desire is to save me from the fate that awaits me; and you assure me, in all your names, that you would joyfully undergo it in my place. This is entirely like yourself, and reminds me of all the sweet and tender ties in which we have been brought up together from infancy. Oh! take comfort, dear Julia; thanks to the protection of God, I promise you, that it will be easy for me, much easier than I could have believed, to support whatever shall happen to me.

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* It was in the neighbourhood of Manheim that Karl and his brother found themselves united under the same standard, in 1815.

"Receive then, all of you, my warm and sincere thanks for the joy you have given my heart.

"Now that I have perceived, by these invigorating letters, that, like the prodigal son, the love and kindness of my family are greater on my return than at my departure, I will, with as much care as possible, describe to you my state of body and mind; and I pray to God that he will strengthen my words, so that my letter may contain the equivalent of what yours brought me, and restore to you that state of calm and serenity at which I myself have arrived.

"Indifferent, by reason of my power over myself, to the goods and ills of this world, you know that during these last years I have lived only for moral enjoyments; and I may say that, touched doubtless by my efforts, God, the sacred source of all good, has rendered me apt to seek them and to partake of them. God is always near me, now as formerly, and I find in him, the supreme principle of the creation of all things—in him, our holy Father, not only consolation and strength, but an unchangeable friend, who will be with me whenever I shall have need of his consolations. Were he far from me, had I turned my eyes away from him, I should find myself most unfortunate and most miserable; but by his grace, on the contrary, humble and weak as I am, he gives me strength and energy against every thing that can befal me. All that I have hitherto revered as sacred, all that I have desired as good, all that I have aspired to as heavenly—all remain unchanged to this hour. And I thank God for it, for I should have been in despair, if I had found that my heart had adored fallacious images, and had been wrapped up in fleeting chimeras. So my confidence in these ideas, my love for them, as the guardian angels of my mind, increase every moment, will increase till my latest hour, and will smooth my passage from time to eternity. I pass my silent days in exalted thought and Christian humility; and I have sometimes those visions from above, which I have had ever since my childhood. My malady, though long and painful, has always been sufficiently under the influence of my will to leave me leisure to apply myself to history, the sciences, and religious study; and when the violence of the pain sometimes interrupted these occupations, still I contended successfully with *ennui;* for remembrance of the past, resignation under the present, faith in the future, were sufficient within me and about me, not to allow me to fall from my terrestrial paradise. The pain I suffer seldom now makes me lose consciousness; the swelling and inflammation have never risen to a great height, and the fever has always been moderate, although, for nearly ten months, I have been obliged to remain in bed on my back, without power to move; and though my breast, near the heart, has discharged more than forty pints of matter, the wound, although always open, is in a good state; and this I owe not only to the skill and care with which I am treated, but to the pure blood which I have received from you, my dear mother. Thus, neither human aid nor divine encouragement have been wanting to me. So I have every motive, on my birthday,—oh! not to curse the hour when I was born, but on the contrary, after serious contemplation of this world, to thank God, and you, my very dear parents, for the life which you have given me! I have kept this birthday, this 18th of October, in a peaceful and fervent submission to the holy will of God. On Christmas-day I strove to place myself in the frame of mind befitting the children of God; and, with his aid; the new year will pass as the last, in pain of body, perhaps, but certainly in joy of soul.

"I cannot hope to see a twenty-fifth new year. May, then, my prayer be heard! May this picture of my present life bring you some tranquillity! and may this letter, which I write you from the bottom of my heart, not only prove to you that I am not quite unworthy of your inexpressible love, but, on the contrary, assure me this love to eternity!

"The other day, I received your dear letter of the 2nd of December, my beloved mother, and the Grand Duke's commission had also the condescension to allow me to read the letter of my good brother, which accompanied yours. You give me the best news I can receive, that you are all in health; and you send me some preserved fruits from your dear house. I thank you for them from the bottom of my heart. What makes them most delightful to me, is the reflection that you are anxiously occupied about me, summer as well as winter. I think that it is you and my dear Julia who have gathered and preserved them for me; and I abandon myself with all my soul to so sweet an enjoyment.

"I rejoice sincerely at the arrival of my little cousin into the world; I most joyfully offer my congratulations, and my blessing on his head.

"Not to incommode too much the Grand Duke's commission, we shall be forced, I believe, to discontinue our correspondence. I conclude, then, by once again assuring you, perhaps for the last time, of my profound filial submission, and of my fraternal affection. Your very tenderly attached—Karl Ludwig Sand."

Indeed, from this time all correspondence ceased between Karl and his family. He wrote to them only once more, when his fate was made known to him, a letter which will appear in the sequel.

We have seen, from the above letter, with what care Karl was treated: this humanity did not fail for an instant. Nobody, indeed, regarded him as an ordinary assassin. Many pitied him secretly, and some openly excused him. The Grand Duke's commission itself protracted the affair as much as possible; for the nature of Sand's wounds made it at first seem likely that it would not be necessary to have recourse to the executioner; and the tribunal would have been glad that God had taken upon himself the execution of judgment. But their expectation was disappointed: the skill of the physician triumphed, not over the wound, but over death. Sand was not cured; but he remained alive: and they began to see that they should be forced to slay him. The emperor Alexander, who had made Kotzebue his councillor, and who did not mistake the cause of the assassination, demanded urgently that justice should have its course. The court, therefore, was forced to proceed; but wishing sincerely to have a pretext for as much delay as possible, it ordered that a physician of Heidelberg should visit Sand, and make a precise report upon his condition. As Sand remained constantly in bed, and as he could not be executed there, the court hoped that the physician's report, by showing that the prisoner could not possibly rise, would give him a new respite.

Accordingly, the physician appointed came from Heidelberg to Manheim, and, introducing himself to Sand as being drawn thither by the interest which he felt for him, he asked him if he did not feel somewhat better, and if it would not be possible for him to rise. Sand looked at him for a moment, and then said, with a smile—

"I understand, sir; they wish to know whether I am strong enough to mount a scaffold. I really do not know: but, if you please, we shall try."

At these words he rose; and accomplishing, with a superhuman courage, what he had not even attempted for fourteen months, he walked twice round his room, and sat down on his bed.

"You see, sir," he said, "that I am strong enough. It would be therefore only losing the precious time of my judges to detain them longer about my business. Let them then give their judgment, for there is nothing to prevent it from being executed."

The physician made his report: delay was no longer possible; Russia was more and more pressing; and on the 5th of May, 1820, the supreme court of justice pronounced sentence, which was confirmed on the 12th by his royal highness the Grand Duke of Baden. It declares the accused, Karl Sand, of Wonsiedel, guilty of assassination, on his own confession, on the person of the imperial Russian councillor of state Kotzebue; and therefore, for his just punishment, and for an example which may deter others, ordains that he shall be put to death by the sword. All the expenses of the trial, including those occasioned by his public execution, in consideration of the prisoner's want of fortune, to be defrayed from the judicial funds of the state.

It will be observed, that this sentence, although it condemned the accused to death, which it was difficult to avoid, was both in form and substance as mild as possible: since, in striking Sand, it did not ruin his poor family by the costs of a long and expensive trial.

A delay still took place of five days, and the sentence was not announced to him till the 17th, when Sand was informed that two judicial functionaries were at the door; he suspected that they came to read him his sentence. He requested a moment's time to rise, which he had only done once before, and on the occasion we have mentioned, for fourteen months. However, he was too weak to hear the sentence standing; and, after having saluted the deputation, he begged leave to sit down, saying that it was not owing to weakness of the soul, but of body, that he did so. He added—

"You are welcome, gentleman; for I have suffered so much for fourteen months, that you appear to me like angels of deliverance."

He heard the whole sentence without any affectation, and with a placid smile on his lips. When it was concluded,

"I had no expectation of a better destiny," he said; "and when, more than a year ago, I stopped on the little hill which overlooks your town, I saw before me the spot which would be my grave,—I ought then to thank God and man for having prolonged my existence till now."

The officers took their leave. Sand rose a second time to salute them as they went; then he reseated himself pensively on the chair, near which M. G., the governor of the prison was standing. After a moment's silence, tears stood in his eyes, and began to roll. Suddenly turning towards M. G., to whom he was much attached—

"I hope," he said, "that my parents will prefer seeing me die this violent death, than of some slow and wretched malady. As for me, I shall be very happy to hear the hour strike, when my death will satisfy those who hate me, and whom, according to my principles, I ought to hate."

He then wrote to his family:

"Manheim, the 17th of May, 1820.

"Dear Parents, Brothers, and Sisters,—You must have received, through the Grand Duke's commission, my last letters. In them I answered yours, and endeavoured to console you as to my condition, by describing to you the state of my mind; the contempt at which I have arrived for all that is frail and earthly, when contrasted with the execution of a design, and with that intellectual liberty which is the only nourishment of the soul: in short, I endeavoured to console you by the assurance, that the sentiments, the principles, and the convictions of other days, have been faithfully preserved in me, and have remained unchanged. But all that was a superfluous precaution on my part, I am certain; for you have never required any thing else from me but to have God before my eyes and in my heart; and you have seen, under your care, how this precept was so engraven in my soul, that it became, both for this world and the next, my only, guide to happiness. Doubtless, as he was in me and near me, God will be in you and near you at the moment when this letter will bring you the news of the reading of my sentence. I die willingly, and God will give me strength to die as I ought. I write to you perfectly tranquil and calm on all things, and I hope that your life also will pass away calm and tranquil, until the moment when our souls shall meet again, endowed with new strength, to love each other, and partake together of eternal happiness.

"As for me, such as I have lived since I have known myself, that is to say, with a serenity full of heavenly desire, and a courageous and indomitable love of liberty, such I die. May God be with you and with me, your son, brother, and friend, KARL LUDWIG SAND."

From this moment nothing disturbed his serenity; the whole day he conversed more gaily than usual, slept well, did not awake till half-past seven, said that he felt strengthened, and thanked God for thus visiting him.

It was soon publicly known that the day of execution had been fixed for the 20th of May, that is, three whole days after the reading of the sentence to the prisoner. From that time, with the permission of Sand, persons were allowed to enter who wished to speak with him, and if he himself had no repugnance to see them. Among these, three remained with him longer than the rest.

One was Major Holzangen, who commanded the patrol who had arrested him, or rather taken him up dying, and carried him to the hospital. He asked if he remembered him. Sand was so self-possessed when he stabbed himself, that though he had only seen the major an instant, and had never seen him since, he recollected the most minute particulars of the dress which he had on fourteen months before, and which was a full uniform. When the conversation turned upon the death that Sand, still so young, was going to suffer, the major expressed his pity; but Sand answered him, smiling, "There is only one difference between you and me, major; I die for my own convictions; you die for the convictions of others."

After the major came a young student of Jena, whom Sand had known at the university. He happened to be in the duchy of Baden, and wished to pay his old friend a visit. Their meeting was affecting, and the student wept bitterly; but Sand consoled him with his usual calmness and serenity.

A workman then requested to see Sand, alleging that he had been his schoolfellow at Wonsiedel. Though Sand did not remember his name, he gave orders to admit him. The workman reminded him that he had made part of the little army which Sand commanded, the day of the assault on the tower of Saint Catherine. This reminiscence guided Sand, who then remembered him perfectly, and spoke to him with affection of his native place, and of his dear mountains; he then charged him to carry his last greetings to his family, and to exhort his mother, his father, his brother and his sisters not to grieve on his account; since the messenger who undertook to carry them his last words, could tell them in what a calm and joyful spirit he waited death.

To this workman succeeded one of the guests whom Sand had met on the staircase immediately after the death of Kotzebue. He asked him if he acknowledged his crime, and felt repentance.

Sand answered, "I had thought of it for a whole year; I have thought of it for fourteen months; and my opinion of it is unchanged; I did what I was to do."

After the departure of this last visiter, Sand sent for M. G., the governor of the prison, and told him he would be very glad to speak with the executioner, having some inquiries to make of him as to the manner he should hold himself to render the operation more sure and more easy. M. G. made some objections; but Sand insisted with his ordinary mildness, and M. G. at length promised that he would get the person he asked for to come to the prison immediately on his arrival from Heidelberg, where he lived.

The rest of the day was passed in fresh visits, and in philosophical and moral conversation, in which Sand developed his social and religious theories with a lucidity of expression and an elevation of thought which he had never before exhibited. The governor, from whom I have these details, told me, that he would regret all his life not being able to write short-hand, that he might have preserved sentiments worthy of Plato.

Night came; Sand passed a part of the evening in writing; it is supposed that it was a poem he was composing; but doubtless he burnt it, for no trace of it was found. At eleven o'clock he went to bed, and slept till six in the morning. Next day he supported the dressing of his wounds, always very painful, with great courage, without fainting as he sometimes did, and without allowing a single complaint to escape him.

The operation was over; Sand was in bed as usual; M. G. was seated at the foot of the bed, when the door opened, and a man entered and saluted Sand and M. G. The governor immediately rose, and, in a voice full of emotion, said to Sand, "This is M. Widemann, of Heidelberg, whom you desired to see."

Sand's face brightened with a strange expression of joy. Raising himself to a sitting posture, he said, "You are welcome, sir;" and making him sit near his bed, and taking his hand, he began to thank him for his kindness, with so much earnestness and feeling that M. Widemann, deeply moved, was unable to answer. Sand encouraged him to speak, and give him the details he wanted, saying, "Be firm, sir, for I shall not fail you; I shall not shrink; and if it is even necessary to give two or three blows to separate my head from my body, which they say sometimes happens, do not let that trouble you."

Sand then rose, leaning on M. G., to go through with the executioner the strange and terrible rehearsal of the drama in which next day he was to play the principal part. M. Widemann made him sit in a chair in the proper position, and entered with him into all the details of the execution. Sand, perfectly instructed, begged him not to hurry, and to take his own time. He then thanked him beforehand; "For," added he, "I shall not be able afterwards." Sand then returned to his bed, leaving the executioner pale and trembling.

All these particulars were preserved by M. G.; for the executioner's emotion was so great that he had no distinct remembrance of any thing.

After M. Widemann, three ecclesiastics were introduced, with whom Sand conversed upon religious subjects; one of them remained six hours with him; and said to him, on going away, he had a commission to obtain from him a promise that he should not speak to the people at the place of execution. Sand gave the promise, and added, "Even had I wished it, my voice has become so weak that the people could not hear me."

In the mean time, the scaffold was prepared in the meadow, to the left of the road from Heidelberg; it was a platform of five or six feet high, and ten feet square. As it had been presumed, that, owing to the interest inspired by the prisoner, and the approach of Pentecost, the crowd would be immense, and as it was feared that there might be some movement of the universities, the guard of the prison had been trebled; and General Neustein had come from Karlsruhe to Manheim, with twelve hundred infantry, three hundred and fifty cavalry, and a company of artillery with their guns.

On the afternoon of the 19th there arrived, as had been foreseen, so many students who lodged in the neighbouring villages, that it was decided that the execution, instead of taking place the next day at eleven in the morning as had been arranged, should be anticipated, and take place at five. Sand's consent however was necessary, for they could not execute him until three whole days after the reading of the sentence; and as the sentence had been read to him at half-past ten, Sand had a right to live till eleven.

Before four o'clock in the morning, the persons sent for that purpose entered his room. His sleep was so sound that they were obliged to awake him; he opened his eyes with a smile, as was his wont, and guessing their errand, said,

"Have I slept so well that it is eleven already?"

They said "No!" but that they came to ask him to permit them to advance the hour, for they feared some conflict between the students and the soldiers; and as the military arrangements were completely made, such a collision would necessarily be fatal to his friends.

Sand answered that he was ready that instant, that he only asked time to take a bath, as the ancients had used to do at the moment of battle. However, the verbal authority which he had given not being sufficient, they put before Sand a pen and paper; and he wrote with a firm hand, and in his usual manner,

"I thank the authorities of Manheim for having anticipated my own earnest wish, by advancing the time of my execution by six hours."

"*Sit nomen Domini benedictum.*"

"From the prison, the 20th May, in the morning, the day of my deliverance. KARL LUDWIG SAND!"

When Sand had given these lines to the clerk, the surgeon came forward to dress his wounds as usual. Sand looked at him with a smile:

"Is it worth while?" he asked.

"You will be stronger," answered the surgeon.

"Then do it," said Sand.

A bath was brought; Sand sat down in it, and had his long and beautiful locks arranged with the greatest care. When his toilet was over, he put on a short surtout, of the German make; his shirt-collar was turned over his shoulders; and he had tight white pantaloons, and boots over them. He sat down on his bed, and prayed some time in a low voice with the priest; and then took leave of them and the surgeon, saying to them,

"Do not attribute the agitation of my voice to weakness, but to gratitude."

The priests offered to accompany him to the scaffold, but he declined their kindness.

"It is unnecessary," he said, "I am perfectly prepared; I have made my peace with God, and my conscience is at ease; besides, am I not almost an ecclesiastic myself?"

And when one of them asked, whether, at the moment of his departure, he nourished any feeling of hatred—

"O my God!" said he, "when have I ever had any such feeling?"

The increasing noise in the street now became audible, and Sand said again that they might dispose of him, and that he was ready. At this moment the executioner entered with his two assistants; he was dressed in a long black cloak, under which he concealed his sword. Sand took him affectionately by the hand; and, as M. Widemann, embarrassed by the sword which he desired to keep from Sand's sight, did not dare to come forward—

"Come," said Sand, "and show me your sword; I have never seen such a one, and am curious to see what it is like."

M. Widemann, pale and trembling, showed him the sword. Sand examined it with attention; and passing his finger over the edge—

"Well," he said, "the blade is good; do not tremble, and all will be well."

Turning towards M. G., who was in tears—

"You will do me, will you not, the service of conducting me to the scaffold?"

M. G. merely made him a sign in the affirmative, for he could not speak. Sand took his arm, and a third time repeated—

"Well, what wait you for, gentlemen? I am ready."

When they got into the courtyard, Sand saw all the prisoners weeping at the windows. Though he had never seen them, they were to him old friends; for every time they passed his door, knowing that in that cell lay the student who had killed Kotzebue, they held up their chains so as not to disturb him with the noise.

All Manheim was in the street leading to the place of execution, which was patroled by numerous bodies of military. On the day when the sentence had been read, they had searched over all the town for a vehicle to carry Sand to the scaffold; but nobody, not even the carmen, had one either for hire, or for sale. It was found necessary, therefore, to buy one at Heidelberg, without telling for what purpose it was wanted.

Sand found this carriage in the courtyard, and got into it with M. G. Turning towards him—

“Sir,” he said, in a whisper, “if you should chance to see me turn pale, call me by my name; my name only, do you understand? that will be sufficient.”

The carriage door opened, and Sand appeared. Every voice, with one impulse, cried, “Adieu, Sand! adieu!” and at the same time, from the dense crowd pressed in the street, and from the windows around, bouquets of flowers were thrown towards him, some of which fell into the carriage. At this scene, Sand, whose firmness had not for a moment forsaken him, was unable to refrain from tears; and, returning the salutations he received on every side, murmured in a low voice—

“O my God! give me courage!”

This first explosion over, the procession began to move in profound silence; from time to time only a single voice would cry, “Adieu, Sand!” and a handkerchief, waved by a hand raised above the crowd, showed him from whence the cry had come. On each side of the carriage walked two servants of the prison, with crape on their arms; and after it came a second, containing the authorities of the town.

The air was very cold: it had rained all night, and the sky, dark and cloudy, seemed to share the general sadness. Sand, too weak to sit up, was reclining on the shoulder of M. G., who accompanied him. His visage was mild, calm, yet expressive of pain; his broad and open brow, and his interesting, though not regularly handsome, features, appeared to have grown many years older during his fourteen months of suffering. The procession at last arrived at the place of execution, which was surrounded by a batallion of infantry. Sand lowered his eyes from heaven towards the earth, and perceived the scaffold. At this sight he smiled gently, and, as he got down from the carriage, he said,

“God has given me strength as yet.”

The governor of the prison, and the principal servants, held him up as he mounted the steps. As he did so, the pain he suffered kept his body bent; but, when he got to the top, he drew himself up, saying,

“This, then, is the place where I am to die!”

He turned his eyes towards Manheim, and surveyed the immense crowd which surrounded him. At this moment, a ray of the sun broke through the clouds. Sand saluted it with a smile, and sat down in the chair prepared for him.

As, according to the orders received, his sentence was to be read to him a second time, he was asked if he felt strong enough to hear it standing. He said he would try, and that he hoped, in default of physical force, moral strength would sustain him. He immediately rose from the fatal chair, begging M. G. to stand near enough to support him if he happened to falter. The precaution was unnecessary; Sand stood firm.

After the sentence had been read, he sat down again, and said in a loud voice,

“I die, trusting in God”——

But at these words, M. G. interrupted him:

“Sand,” said he, “what have you promised?”

— ” he answered, “I had forgotten.”

no more to the multitude; but, raising his right hand, and solemnly extending it, he said in a low voice, heard only by those who were about him,

"I take God to witness that I die for the liberty of Germany."

And at these words, and as Conradin had done with his glove, he threw, over the line of soldiers who surrounded him, his rolled up handkerchief into the midst of the people.

The executioner now approached to cut off his hair, but Sand at first opposed it.

"It is for your mother," said M. Widemann.

"On your honour, sir?" asked Sand.

"On my honour."

"Then do it," said Sand, presenting his hair to the executioner.

A few locks only were cut off, and only those which fell down behind. The others were tied with a ribbon over the top of his head. The executioner tied his hands over his breast; but as this position oppressed him, and in consequence of his wound forced him to incline his head, they were placed open on his thighs, and fastened there with cords. As they were about to bind his eyes, he begged M. Widemann to place the bandage so that he could, until his last moment, see the light. His wish was complied with.

A dead silence ensued. The executioner drew his sword, which gleamed like a flash of lightning, and fell. A dreadful cry burst from twenty thousand mouths: the head had not fallen, and although bent over the breast, was still held by the neck. The executioner struck again, and with the same blow cut off the head and a part of one of the hands.

At that instant, notwithstanding the efforts of the soldiers, the line was broken, men and women rushed towards the scaffold; the blood was wiped up, to the last drop, with handkerchiefs; the chair on which Sand had sat was broken, and shared in fragments; and they who could not obtain any of these, cut bits of the bloody wood from the scaffold.

The head and body were placed in a coffin covered with black, and carried back to the prison, escorted by a large party of military. At midnight, the corpse was conveyed silently, and without torches or lights, to the Protestant cemetery, in which, fourteen months before, Kotzebue had been buried. A grave had been secretly dug; the coffin was lowered into it; those who were present at the funeral were made to swear on the gospels not to reveal the place where Sand was interred, until they were relieved from their oath. The grave was covered with the green turf, which had been neatly lifted up, and was now replaced, so that there was no appearance of a fresh grave. Then the nocturnal grave-diggers retired, leaving a guard at the entrance.

It is in that place that, twenty paces asunder, Sand and Kotzebue rest; Kotzebue, in the most conspicuous part of the cemetery, and under a monument, on which is engraved this inscription:

"He was persecuted by the world without pity;
Calumny was his unhappy lot;
He found happiness only in the arms of his wife,
And rest only in the bosom of death.
Envy strove to cover his path with thorns;
Love strewed it with flowers.
May heaven forgive him
As he has forgiven the world."

You must seek the grave of Sand in the corner at the extreme left of the door of the cemetery: a wild plum-tree, from which every passing traveller carries away a few leaves, is the only thing that marks the spot. The meadow in which Sand was executed is still called by the people *Sand's Himmel-fartswiese*, which means, " The meadow from whence Sand ascended to heaven."

Towards the end of September, 1838, we were at Manheim, where I had stopped three days to collect all the information I could as to the life and death of Karl Ludwig Sand. But after these three days, notwithstanding the activity of my researches, their results were very incomplete, either from my bad plan of conducting them, or because my being a stranger produced some distrust in those to whom I applied.

I quitted Manheim much disappointed; and after having visited the little Protestant cemetery, in which were interred, at twenty paces from each other, Sand and Kotzebue, I had ordered my coachman to take the road to Heidelberg, when, after a few steps, knowing the object of my researches, he stopped of his own accord, asking me if I wished to see the place where Sand was executed. At the same time he pointed out to me with his hand a little mound in the middle of a meadow and a few paces from a little brook. I eagerly went towards the spot, and knew it immediately by some remains of branches of cyprus and evergreens and forget-me-nots scattered over the ground.

This sight, it may be imagined, instead of diminishing my ardour for investigation, only augmented it. I was more and more chagrined at going away so ill-informed, when I perceived a man of forty-five or fifty. who was walking a little way off, and who, suspecting the cause that had brought me there, looked at me with curiosity. I resolved to make a last effort, and going up to him,

" Sir," I said, " I am a stranger ; I am travelling to collect the rich and poetical traditions of your Germany. From the way in which you look at me, I think you know what has brought me to this meadow. Could you give me any particulars as to the life and death of Sand ?"

" For what purpose, sir ?" he asked in French that was almost unintelligible.

" For a very German object, sir, be assured. By the little which I have been able to learn, Sand seems to me, to be one of those spectres which appear to you only the greater and poetical, from being wrapped in a bloody shroud. But he is not known in France ; he might there be confounded with a Fieschi, or a Meunier, and I should wish, as far as I can, to enlighten my countrymen in regard to him."

" It would give me much pleasure, sir, to concur in so good a work; but you see that I speak very little French, you speak no German ; so that we should find it difficult to understand each other."

" That matters nothing," I replied, " I have in my carriage yonder, a lady, who, I hope will satisfy you as an interpreter; who speaks German like Goethe, and from whom, when once you have begun to speak, I defy you to withhold."

" Well, then," said the German, " I desire no better than to be useful to you."

We returned to the carriage which waited for us on the highway, and I presented to my fellow-traveller, the new recruit I had made. The usual salutations were exchanged and the conversation began in German. Although I did not understand a word of what was said, is was easy to see from the rapidity of the questions, and the length of the answers, that the conversation was most interesting; at length, in about half an hour; desirous of knowing what was going on,

"Well!" said I.

"Well!" answered my interpreter, "you have been fortunate, you could not have applied to a better person. This gentleman knew Sand; he is the governor of the prison where Sand was confined, M. G."

"Indeed!"

"For nine months, that is, from the time he quitted the hospital, this gentleman saw him every day. But this is not all; M. G. was with him in the carriage which carried him to execution; he was with him on the scaffold: there is only one portrait of Sand in all Manheim, and he has it."

"Ask," said I, "if M. G. will permit us to commit to writing the information he can give me."

The question was put, and answered in the affirmative. M. G. got into the carriage with us, and in place of departing for Heidelberg, we returned to Manheim, and alighted at the entrance of the prison; M. G.'s complaisance did not diminish. With the greatest goodnature, and the utmost patience, he told me every circumstance he knew; at last, I questioned him as to the mode of executions in that place.

"As to that," he said, "I can recommend you to a person in Heidelberg, who will give you every information you want on that subject."

I accepted the offer with gratitude; and when I took leave of M. G., he gave me the promised letter; it bore this direction:—"To Doctor Widemann, 111, High-street, Heidelberg." I turned to M. G.

"Is he the father of the executioner who beheaded Sand?" I demanded.

"He is his son, and he was by him when the execution took place."

"What profession does he follow?"

"The same as his father, to which he has succeeded."

"But you call him Doctor."

"Certainly, all executioners bear that title with us."

"Doctor of what?"

"Doctor of surgery."

"Indeed," said I; "it is quite the contrary with us; it is the surgeons whom we call executioners."

"You will find," added M. G., "a very worthy young man, who although then very young, preserves a strong remembrance of the event; as for his poor father, I believe he would as soon have cut off his right hand, as execute Sand: but had he refused, another would have done it; he was obliged to do what was his duty, and he did his best."

We arrived at Heidelberg at eleven at night. My first visit the next day was to Dr. Widemann. It was not without emotion, that we knocked at the door of "the last judge," as the Germans call him. An old woman opened it, and desired us to wait for M. Widemann, who was dressing, in a pretty little study; it was filled with curiosities, with petrified sea plants, shells, stuffed birds, and dried plants; a double-barrelled gun, powder flask and pouch, showed that M. Widemann was a sportsman. In a few moments he came into the room.

M. Widemann was a very handsome young man of about thirty; he was in a plain but genteel morning dress. He appeared at first not only embarrassed, but hurt by our visit; I hastened to give him the letter from M. G., and to tell him the cause which brought me there. He gradually recovered himself, and at last was as hospitable and obliging as his introducer had been the evening before.

M. Widemann told us all he knew, and among other things, that his father, at the risk of giving offence, had asked permission to have another scaffold erected at his own expense, so that no criminal should be executed on the altar on which the martyr had suffered. This leave was granted; and from this scaffold, M. Widemann had made the doors and the windows of a little country house, situated in the middle of a vineyard. For three or four years this house was constantly an object of pilgrimage; but at length the visiters by degrees had become less numerous. Now that some of the very persons, who had steeped their handkerchiefs in Sand's blood, hold public functions, and are the paid servants of government, it is only a few strangers who now and then ask to see these relics.

Our readers will judge better from this anecdote, than from any thing that we could say, what sort of a man he was who has left such a remembrance in the hearts of his gaoler and his executioner.

VANINKA.

TOWARDS the end of the reign of the Emperor Paul the First, that is, about the middle of the first year of the nineteenth century, as four o'clock in the afternoon was striking from the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, whose gilded vane overlooks the ramparts of the fortress, a considerable crowd of people of all conditions began to assemble before the house of General Count Tchermayloff, formerly military governor of a town in the government of Pultava. Their curiosity was excited by the preparations, in the courtyard, for the punishment of the knout, which was to be inflicted on one of the general's slaves, who was his barber. Although this kind of punishment was common enough at St. Petersburg, it did not the less excite curiosity when it was publicly inflicted.

About half-past four, a young man of about five and twenty, in the elegant uniform of an aide-de-camp, and with his breast covered with decorations, appeared in the court. He stopped an instant, and fixed his eyes on a window, the curtains of which, closely drawn, did not give him the least chance of satisfying his curiosity. Seeing it was unnecessary to lose his time looking in that direction, he made a sign to a slave who was standing near a door which led to the servants' apartments. The door immediately opened; and, in the middle of the slaves, who were forced to attend, that the sight might serve them as an example, appeared the culprit, who was to receive the punishment of his offence, followed by the executioner. The culprit was, as we have said, the general's barber, and the executioner was the coachman, whose skill in handling the whip raised or degraded him, which you will, whenever a punishment was to take place, to the post of executioner; a post which did not in the least deprive him of the esteem or even the friendship of his comrades, who were well convinced that Ivan's heart had nothing to do with their punishment. But as his arm, as well as the rest of his body, was the property of the general, they were never surprised when he employed him in this manner. Moreover, a correction administered by the hands of Ivan was always lighter than it would have been, coming from the hands of any body else. For it happened now and then that Ivan, who was a goodnatured fellow, miscounted one or two blows of the knout in the dozen; or, if he was obliged by the overseer of the punishment to be more correct in his counting, he contrived that the point of the whip should fall on the planks on which the culprit was laid, which lessened the sharpness of the stroke. Accordingly, when it was Ivan's own turn to be fastened to the fatal couch, and to receive on his own back the correction which he was in the habit of administering, the executioner for the time had the same consideration for him that he had for others; remembering only the blows spared, and not the blows received. This exchange of mutual benefits, therefore, was productive of an excellent understanding between Ivan and his comrades, which was never so firmly knit as at the moment when an execution was to take place. For an hour or two afterwards, indeed, the receiver was a little unjust to the giver. But the grudge seldom outlasted the evening, or held out against the first glass of spirits, which the operator drank to the health of the patient.

The person on whom Ivan was now going to exercise his skill, was a man five or six and thirty, with red hair and beard, a little above the middle height. His Greek origin was discoverable in his face, which, even in its expression of terror, had preserved its habitual character of slyness and cunning. When he arrived at the place of execution, the culprit stopped, cast a look on the window towards which the attention of the young aide-de-camp had been already directed, and which always had remained closely shut: then turning his eyes slowly on the crowd which blockaded the entrance from the street, he finished by casting them, with a dolorous shrug of the shoulders, on the plank on which he was to be stretched. This movement did not escape his friend Ivan, who, approaching him to take off his striped shirt, which covered his shoulders, took the opportunity of saying, in a low voice:

"Come, Gregory, take courage!"

"You know what you promised me," answered the patient.

"Not for the first strokes, Gregory; do not reckon upon that. During the first strokes the aide-de-camp will look on; but, for the last, be at ease, we shall find means to cheat him of a few."

"But mind, take care of the point of the whip."

"I shall do my best, Gregory, I shall do my best; don't you know me?"

"Ah, very true!" answered Gregory.

"Well?" said the aide-de-camp.

"Well, your lordship, we are ready."

"Wait, wait, your High Origin," cried poor Gregory, giving the young captain the title of *vache vousse korodiè*, by which colonels are designated; "I think Lady Vaninka's window is going to open."

The young captain hastily lifted his eyes towards the spot, which had already, as we have said, several times attracted his attention; but not a fold of the silk curtains, which were perceived through the panes of glass, had moved.

"You are mistaken, you fool!" said the aide-de-camp, slowly withdrawing his eyes from the window as if he also had hoped to see it open;—"you are mistaken; and, besides, what has your noble mistress to do with all this?"

"Pardon, your excellency," continued Gregory, gratifying the aide-de-camp with a new rank; "but only—as it is on her account I am going to receive—she might have pity on a poor servant—and—"

"Enough," said the captain, hurriedly, and as if he himself had been of the culprit's opinion, and regretted that Vaninka had not shown mercy; "enough, let us proceed."

"Instantly, your lordship, instantly," said Ivan: then turning towards Gregory, "now, comrade," continued he, "the time is come."

Gregory heaved a deep sigh, cast a last look at the window, and seeing that every thing remained in the same state, he at last mustered up resolution to stretch himself on the fatal plank. At the same time, two other slaves, whom Ivan had chosen as assistants, took hold of his hands, and stretching out his arms, fastened his wrists to two posts, so that he was as if placed on a cross. His neck was then fixed in a collar; and, seeing that all was ready, and that no favourable sign appeared at the still closed window, the young aide-de-camp made a sign with his hand, and said: "Now!"

"Patience, your lordship, patience," said Ivan, still delaying the execution, in the hope that some sign would come from the inexorable window; "there is a knot in my knout, and if I leave it, Gregory will have cause to complain."

The knout is a kind of whip with a handle about two feet long; to this handle is fastened a flat leather thong, about two inches broad, and four feet long; terminated by a copper or iron ring, to which is fastened, as a continuation of the first, another thong two feet long, and at first an inch and a half broad, but gradually decreasing until it comes to a point. This lash is steeped in milk, and then dried in the sun, so that its edge becomes as sharp as that of a knife; moreover, at every six blows, the lash is changed because it is softened by the blood.

However unwillingly or clumsily, Ivan undid the knot, it was now necessary to finish it. The spectators, besides, began to murmur; and their murmurs having drawn the young aide-de-camp out of the reverie into which he appeared to have fallen, he raised his head which had been bent on his breast, cast a last glance on the window, and, seeing no token of mercy, turned again towards the coachman, and, with a more peremptory air, ordered him to begin the punishment.

There was no further pretext for delay. Recoiling two paces to take his spring, Ivan stepped forward to his former place; raising himself on his toes, he made the knout whirl round his head, and letting it suddenly fall, he struck Gregory with it so dexterously, that the lash went three times round his body, enfolding him like a serpent; while the point struck the under part of the plank. Nevertheless, Gregory gave a great cry, and Ivan counted one.

At this cry, the young aide-de-camp again looked towards the window, but the window remained closed; and mechanically he turned his eyes to the patient, repeating the word, "One."

The knout had marked a treble blue bloody line on Gregory's shoulders.

Ivan again took his spring, and, with the same skill as before, again surrounded the culprit's body with the lash, taking care always that the point should not touch him. Gregory gave another cry, and Ivan counted two.

At the fifth stroke, some drops of blood reached the young officer, who drew back, took out his handkerchief, and wiped his face. Ivan took the opportunity of counting seven instead of six; the captain made no observation.

At the ninth stroke, Ivan interrupted himself to change the lash, and, hoping that he would succeed as well as before, counted eleven instead of ten. At this moment a window, opposite to Vaninka's, opened. A man of forty-five or fifty, in a general's uniform, appeared, and, calling out in a careless tone, "Enough!" closed the window.

On the general appearing, the young aide-de-camp had turned towards him, with his left hand glued to the seam of his pantaloons, and his right hand to his hat, and stood motionless. When the window was reclosed, he repeated the general's word, and the lash fell without touching the culprit.

"Thank his excellency, Gregory," said Ivan, rolling the lash of the knout round its handle, "for he has forgiven you two blows: which," added he, as he stooped down to release the culprit's hands, "with the two that I have skipped, only makes a total of eight strokes instead of twelve."

But poor Gregory was not in a state to thank anybody; nearly fainting with pain, he could hardly hold himself up. Two slaves took him by the arms and led him, followed by Ivan, to the quarters of the slaves. When he arrived at the door, he stopped, turned his head, and perceiving the aide-de-camp, whose eyes followed him with an air of pity:

"Mr. Fœdor," he said, "thank his excellency the general for me. As for the lady Vaninka," he added, between his teeth, "I shall thank *her* myself."

"What are you murmuring?" cried the young officer, angrily.

"Nothing, your lordship, nothing," said Ivan; "the poor lad thanks you, Mr. Fœdor, for the trouble you have taken in attending his execution, and says it is a great honour for him; that's all."

"Well, well," said the young man; "if Gregory wants to spare me this trouble another time, let him drink a little less spirits, or, when drunk, let him at least remember to be more respectful."

Ivan made a sign of deep submission and followed his comrades. Fœdor re-entered the house, and the crowd retired, much disconcerted with Ivan's bad faith and the general's generosity, which had defrauded them of four blows of the knout, that is, a third of the punishment.

And now that we have made our readers acquainted with some of the personages of this history, they will permit us to make them also acquainted with those who have as yet merely appeared, or remain concealed behind the curtain.

General Count Tchermayloff, after having had the government of one of the most important towns in the neighbourhood of Pultava, had been recalled to St. Petersburg by the Emperor Paul, who honoured him with a particular friendship. He had remained a widower with one daughter, who had inherited the fortune, the beauty, and the pride of her mother, who pretended to descend, in direct line, from one of the chieftains of that race of Tartars, who, under the conduct of Gengis, invaded Russia in the thirteenth century. Unhappily this haughty disposition had been still augmented in the young Vaninka by the education she had received. Having lost his wife, and not being able himself to undertake the care of his daughter, General Tchermayloff had procured for her an English governess, who, instead of combating her pupil's disdainful inclinations, had given them a new impulse, by filling her head with those aristocratic notions which make the English nobility the proudest in the world. Among the different studies in which Vaninka was engaged, there was one to which she was especially attached; this was, if one can so speak, the science of her own rank. She knew perfectly the degree of station and power of every family belonging to the nobility. She knew accurately who were a grade above her, and whom she had precedence of; and (what, however, is not easy in Russia) she could call every one by the precise title to which his rank gave him the right. She had the most profound contempt, therefore, for all whose title was under that of excellency. As for the serfs and slaves, we may conceive, with such a character as hers, that she made no account of their existence. She had more feeling for her horse and her dog, and certainly she would not for an instant have put in the balance the life of a slave with that of either of these interesting animals. For the rest, like all ladies of distinction in her country, she was a good musician, and spoke equally well the French, Italian, German, and English languages.

The expression of her countenance was in harmony with her character. Vaninka was beautiful, but of a cast a little too decided. Her large black eyes, straight nose, and lips curled with a disdainful expression, produced, at first, in those who approached her, a strange impression, unless when among her equals and superiors, to whom she became like any other woman, while, to her inferiors, she remained proud and inaccessible as a goddess.

At seventeen, Vaninka's education being terminated, her instructress, whose health the severe climate of St. Petersburg had already affected, requested her dismissal. It was granted with that ostentatious gratitude for which the Russian grandees are so remarkable. Vaninka was thus left alone, with nothing to direct her but the blind affection of her father, whose only daughter she was, and who, in his rude admiration of her, regarded her as a compound of every human perfection.

Such was the state of the general's family, when he received a letter from one of the friends of his infancy, written from his deathbed. Exiled to his estates, in consequence of some disputes with Potemkin, Count Romayloff's prospects had been blasted; and, broken-hearted, he retired to a distance of four hundred leagues from St. Petersburg, less, perhaps, on account of his own exile and misfortunes, than their effects on the fortunes of his only son Fœdor. The count, feeling that he was going to leave his son alone in the world, recommended, in the name of their ancient friendship, the young man to the general; requesting that, by means of his favour with the emperor, he would obtain for him a lieutenancy in a regiment. The general immediately answered that his friend's son would find in him a second father; but, when the consoling message arrived, Romayloff was no more; and it was Fœdor who received the letter and brought it back to the general. When he came to announce the loss he had sustained, and to claim the promised protection, whatever diligence, however, he had made, the general had already anticipated him, and Paul I., at his request, had granted the young man a sub-lieutenancy in the regiment Semonowski; so that Fœdor entered on his duties the very next day after his arrival.

Although the young man had only to pass, as it were, from the house of the general to the barracks situated in the quarter of the Litenoi, he remained there long enough to see Vaninka, and to carry away a profound remembrance of her; besides, Fœdor's heart being full of primitive and generous passions, his gratitude to his protector was profound, and extended to all his family; so that perhaps he exaggerated the beauty of the young lady, who was presented to him as his sister, and who, without regard for this title, received him with the coldness and pride of a queen. This apparition, however, cold and frozen as it was, had not the less left its traces on the young man's heart; and his arrival at St. Petersburg inspired him with feelings hitherto unknown to him.

As for Vaninka, she had hardly noticed Fœdor. What was a young sub-lieutenant, without fortune or prospects, to her? What she dreamed of, was some princely union, which would make her one of the most powerful ladies of Russia; and unless he could realize some dream of the Arabian Nights, Fœdor could promise her nothing of the kind.

Some days after their first interview, Fœdor returned to take leave of the general. His regiment made part of the contingent which Field Marshal Suvarow was to take with him to Italy; and Fœdor was going to die on the battle field, or render himself worthy of the noble protector who had answered for his character.

This time, however, perhaps from his elegant uniform, which set off his handsome person; perhaps, because the excitement attending this moment of departure, had invested his image with something interesting and romantic, Vaninka, on her father's invitation, deigned to give Fœdor her hand.

This was more than Fœdor had dared to hope. Kneeling, therefore, on one knee, as if he had been before a queen, and taking Vaninka's between his own trembling hands, he hardly dared to touch it with his lips. Slight, however, as the kiss had been, Vaninka started, as if touched by burning iron; she felt a thrill over her whole body, and a deep blush rose to her cheek. She withdrew her hand so hastily, that Fœdor, fearing lest this farewell salute, respectful as it was, had offended her, remained on his knees, clasped his hands, and looked upon her with such an expression of timid humility, that Vaninka, forgetting her pride, reassured him by a smile. Fœdor rose with a heart full of inexpressible joy, without knowing from whence it proceeded; but of this he was perfectly sure, that, although on the point of quitting Vaninka, he had never in his life been so happy.

The young officer departed, his mind full of golden visions; for his horizon, either gloomy or bright, was worthy of envy: if it ended in a bloody grave, he thought he had seen in Vaninka's eyes that she would regret him. If it opened to glory, glory would bring him back in triumph to St. Petersburg; and glory is a queen who works miracles for those she favours.

The army to which the young officer belonged, crossed Germany, descended into Italy by the mountains of Tyrol, and entered Verona on the 14th of April, 1799. Suvarow immediately effected his junction with General Melas, and took the command of the two armies. Next day General Chasteler proposed to make a reconnaissance; but Suvarow, looking at him with astonishment, answered,

"I know no other way of reconnoitring the enemy, than to march up to them and give them battle."

In fact, Suvarow was accustomed to this expeditious strategy. It was thus that he vanquished the Turks at Folkschany and at Ismailoff; it was thus that he had conquered Poland after a few days campaign, and taken Praga in less than four hours. Catherine, to express her gratitude, had sent to the victorious general a crown of oak, intermixed with precious stones of the value of six hundred thousand rubles; had sent to him a marshal's baton of gold and diamonds, and given him the power of choosing a regiment which should always bear his name; and lastly, on his return, had permitted him to go and take some repose on a magnificent estate which she had given him, as well as the eight thousand slaves who lived upon it. What a splendid example for Fœdor! Suvarow, son of a simple Russian officer, had been brought up in the school of cadets, and left it a sub-lieutenant like himself. Why, in the same age, might there not be two Suvarows?

Suvarow arrived in Italy, preceded by an immense reputation; religious, ardent, indefatigable, resolved, living with the simplicity of a Tartar, fighting with the vivacity of a Cossack; he was just the man necessary to continue the successes of General Melas over the soldiers of the republic, discouraged as they had been by the foolish hesitations of Scherer. Besides, the Austro-Russian army, a hundred thousand strong, was opposed to only twenty-nine or thirty thousand French.

Suvarow began as usual, with a clap of thunder. On the 20th April, he presented himself before Brescia, which vainly attempted to resist. After a cannonade which hardly lasted half an hour, the gate of Prescheria was forced open with hatchets, and the Korsakow division, of which Fœdor's regiment formed the advanced guard, charged into the city, pursuing the garrison, which, composed of only twelve hundred men, took refuge in the citadel. Pressed with an impetuosity which the French had not been in the habit of finding in their enemies, and seeing the ladders planted against the ramparts, the chief of brigade, Boucret, demanded a capitulation; but his position was too precarious for him to obtain any conditions from his savage conquerors. Boucret and his soldiers were made prisoners of war.

Of all men, Suvarow was the one who best knew how to profit by a victory; hardly master of Brescia, the rapid occupation of which had given new discouragement to our army, he ordered General Kray to press vigorously the seige of Prescheria. General Kray, consequently, had established his head-quarters at Valeggio, at an equal distance between Prescheria and Mantua, extending from the Po to the lake of Garda, on the banks of the Mencio, and investing at the same time both cities.

During this time, the commander-in-chief, advancing with the bulk of his army, passed the Oglio in two columns: extending one, under the command of General Rosemberg, towards Bergamo, and pushing on the other, under Melas, as far as the Serio; while corps of seven or eight thousand men, commanded by the Generals Kaim and Hohenzollern, were directed on Placentia and Cremona, occupying all the left bank of the Po; so that the Austro-Russian army advanced, deploying eighty thousand men, in a front of eighteen leagues.

At the sight of the forces who were advancing, and who were treble his own, Scherer, ordering a retreat throughout his whole line, had caused the bridges over the Adda to be destroyed, not hoping to be able to defend them, and had transported his head-quarters to Milan, waiting in that city an answer to the letter he had addressed to the Directory, in which, tacitly acknowledging his incapacity, he sent in his resignation; but, as his successor delayed arriving, and as Suvarow continued to advance, Scherer, shrinking more and more from the responsibility which pressed upon him, made over the command to one of his ablest generals; this general was Moreau, who was going once more to combat those same Russians, in whose ranks he was destined to die.

His unexpected nomination was proclaimed amidst the shouts of joy from the soldiers. He, whom his magnificent campaign on the Rhine had gained for him the name of the French Fabius, surveyed the whole line of his army, saluted by the successive acclamations of its different divisions, who shouted, "Long live Moreau! Long live the saviour of the army of Italy!"

But this enthusiasm, however great, did not blind Moreau to his perilous position. To prevent being outflanked, he was forced to present a parallel line to that of the Russian army; so that, in order to show a front to his enemy, he was obliged to extend it from the lake of Lecco, to Pizzighitone, that is to say, over a line of twenty leagues. He might, indeed, retire towards Piedmont, concentrate his troops on Alexandria, and wait there the reinforcements the Directory promised to send him; but in these operations he would compromise the safety of the army of Naples, by abandoning it isolated to the enemy; he resolved then to defend the passage of the Adda, as long as possible, so as to give the division of Dessolles, which Massena was to send him, time to arrive to defend his left, while the division of Gauthier, to whom orders had been given to evacuate Tuscany, would arrive by forced marches to join his right. As for himself, he remained in the centre to defend personally the fortified bridge of Cassano; the head of which was covered by the Ritorto canal, which was occupied by the intrenched advanced posts, with a numerous artillery. Then, always as prudent as brave, he took measures to ensure, in case of check, his retreat towards the Apennines, and the coast of Genoa.

His dispositions were hardly terminated, when the indefatigable Suvarow entered Triveglio. At the same time with the arrival of the Russian commander-in-chief in this last town, Moreau learnt the reduction of Bergamo and its castle; and on the 23d April, he perceived the heads of the columns of the allied army.

The same day the Russian general divided his troops into three strong columns, corresponding to the three principal points of the French line; but each more than double the number of those they were going to combat. The right column, led by General Wukassowich, advanced towards the lake of Lecco, where General Serrurier waited his coming; the left column, under the command of Melas, placed itself before the intrenchments of Cassano; and lastly, the Austrian divisions of General Topf and Ott, which formed the centre, concentrated themselves at Canonia, to be ready at the given moment to seize on Vaprio. The Austrian and Russian troops bivouacked within range of the cannon of the French advanced guard.

The same evening Fœdor, who with his regiment made part of Chasteler's division, wrote to General Tchermayloff: "We are at last front to front with the French; a great battle must take place to-morrow morning: to-morrow night I shall be a lieutenant or dead."

Next day, which was the 26th of April, cannon was heard at break of day from the extremities of the lines. At the extreme left of our line, the Prince Bagration's grenadiers made the attack; at our extreme right, it was General Seckendorff, who, detached from the camp of Trioeglio, marched upon Crema.

The two attacks took place with very different success. Bagration's grenadiers were repulsed with dreadful slaughter; while Seckendorff, on the contrary, drove the French out of Crema, and pushed on as far as the the bridge of Lodi.

The predictions of Fœdor were not accomplished, his division was not in the affair, and his regiment remained motionless, waiting for orders which did not arrive.

During this night, Moreau, having learnt the advantages gained by Seckendorff on his extreme right, had sent orders to Serrurier only to leave at Lecco, which was a port easy to defend, the eighteenth light demibrigade and a detachment of dragoons, and to fall back on the centre with the rest of his troops. Serrurier received the order about two in the morning and immediately executed it.

The Russians, on their side, had not lost time. Profiting by the darkness of the night, General Wukassowich had caused the bridge which had been destroyed by the French at Brevio to be rebuilt, while General Chasteler was constructing a new one two miles below the castle of Trezzo. These two bridges had been, the one repaired, and the other constructed, without the French advanced posts having the least suspicion. Surprised at four o'clock in the morning by the two Austrian divisions, which, masked by the village of San Gervasio, had reached the right bank of the river without being perceived, the soldiers charged to defend the castle of Trezzo, abandoned it and hastily retreated. The Austrians pursued them as far as Pozzo; but there the French halted suddenly and turned round on their pursuers, as General Serrurier and the soldiers he had brought from Lecco had arrived there, and having heard behind him the cannonade, he had stopped an instant, and, obeying the first law of war, had marched towards the noise and smoke. It was he, then, who rallied the garrison of Trezzo, and who resumed the offensive, sending one of his aides-de-camp to Moreau to inform him of the manœuvre he had thought it proper to make.

The battle then raged between the French and Austrian troops with incredible fury. The old soldiers of Buonaparte had acquired, in their first Italian campaigns, a custom which they could not renounce; it was to beat the subjects of His Imperial Majesty wherever they met them. Nevertheless the superiority of numbers was such, that the French began to give way, when loud shouts, heard from the rear, announced a reinforcement; this was General Grenier, who, sent by Moreau, arrived with his division at the moment when his presence was most necessary.

One part of this new division reinforced the French columns, doubling the masses in the centre, while the other extended itself on the left, to surround the hostile generals; again the drum was beat over all the line, and the grenadiers began to reconquer this battle-field, already twice taken and retaken. But at this moment a reinforcement arrived to the Austrians; this was the Marquis of Chasteler and his division: the advantage of numbers was again on the enemy's side. Grenier immediately threw back his wing to reinforce his centre; and Serrurier, making good his retreat, fell back on Pozzo, where he waited the enemy.

It was on this point that the fury of the battle concentrated itself. Three times was the village of Pozzo taken and retaken, until at last, attacked a fourth time by forces double theirs, the French were obliged to evacuate it. In this last attack an Austrian colonel was mortally wounded; but, on the other side, General Beker, who commanded the rearguard, refusing to beat a retreat with his soldiers, was surrounded with a few men, and after having seen them fall one after another round him, was forced to yield his sword to a young Russian officer, of the regiment of Semenofskoi, who gave his prisoner to the soldiers who followed him, and returned immediately to the combat.

The two French generals had taken for their rallying-point the village of Vaprio; but in the first moment of disorder into which the evacuation of Pozzo had thrown our troops, so terrible a charge had been made by the Austrian cavalry, that Serrurier was separated from his colleague, and forced to retire with two thousand five hundred men on Verderio; while Grenier alone reached the appointed spot and halted at Vaprio, to make head anew against the enemy.

In the mean while a terrible combat was raging in the centre. Melas with eighteen or twenty thousand men had attacked the fortified posts, which were situated, as we have said, at the head of the bridge of Cassano and of the Ritorto canal. At seven in the morning, and as Melas, leading in person three battalions of Austrian grenadiers, attacked the advanced works there, for two hours a dreadful carnage ensued: repulsed three times, and leaving more than fifteen hundred men under the fortifications, the Austrians had thrice returned to the charge, each time reinforced by fresh troops, and always led on and encouraged by Melas, who had his former defeats to avenge. At last, attacked a fourth time, their intrenchments carried, disputing the ground foot by foot, the French retreated behind their second barrier, which defended the entrance of the bridge itself, and where Moreau commanded in person. There, for two hours more, they fought man to man, while a devastating artillery sent death around. At last the Austrians rallied a last time, advanced at the point of the bayonet, and for want of ladders or breach, piled against the walls the bodies of their dead comrades, and succeeded in scaling the parapet. There was not an instant to lose; Moreau ordered a retreat, and while the French recrossed the Adda, he protected, in person, their passage with a single battalion of grenadiers, of which at the end of half-an-hour, there did not survive more than a hundred and twenty men. Three of his aides-de-camp were killed at his side. But the retreat was effected without disorder; he then retired also, always fronting the enemy, who arrived at the bridge as he reached the other bank. The Austrians rushed forward in pursuit; but suddenly a dreadful noise was heard, louder than that of the artillery. The second arch of the bridge was blown up with all who were upon it; each party recoiled to his own side, while, in the vacant space, the remains of men, and broken fragments, fell like a shower of rain.

But at the moment when Moreau had put a momentary obstacle between him and Melas, General Grenier's corps, which had been forced to evacuate Vaprio, and had fled, pursued by the Austro-Russian army of Zoph, Ott, and Chasteler, arrived in confusion. Moreau ordered a change of front, and showing face to the new enemy, who fell upon him the moment he least expected them, he succeeded in rallying Grenier's troops, and in re-establishing the battle. But in the mean time Melas repaired the bridge, and in his turn passed the river. Moreau found himself thus attacked in front and on his two flanks by forces treble his own. It was then that all the officers who surrounded him besought him to take care of his retreat; for on the safety of his person France depended for the preservation of Italy. Moreau resisted long, for he understood the terrible consequences of the battle he had lost, and which he did not wish to survive, although it was impossible for him to regain it; but a chosen band surrounded him, and forming a square, retreated, while the rest of the troops devoted themselves to death, in order to cover the retreat of him whose genius was regarded as the sole hope of the army.

The battle lasted nearly three hours more, during which the rearguard performed prodigies of valour. At last, Melas, seeing that his enemy had escaped him, and feeling that his troops, fatigued by so obstinate a struggle, had need of repose, ordered the combat to cease, and halted on the left bank of the Adda, encamping in the villages of Imago, Gorgonzola, and Cassano; thus remaining master of the field of battle, on which the French left two thousand five hundred dead, a hundred pieces of cannon, and twenty howitzers.

In the evening, Suvarow having invited General Beker to sup with him, asked him who it was that made him prisoner. Beker answered that it was a young officer of the regiment which had first entered Pozzo. Suvarow immediately made inquiries what regiment this was; he was told it was that of Semenofskoi; the commander-in-chief ordered inquiries to be made for the name of this young man. An instant afterwards, sub-lieutenant Fœdor Romayloff was announced. He came to give Suvarow General Beker's sword. Suvarow kept him to supper along with his prisoner.

The next day Fœdor wrote to his protector:

"I have kept my word. I am a lieutenant, and field-marshal Suvarow has asked for me, of his majesty the emperor, the order of St. Vladimir."

On the 28th of April Suvarow entered Milan, which Moreau had abandoned, to retire behind Tesino, and ordered the walls of that capital to be placarded with the following proclamation, which admirably paints the spirit of the Muscovite hero:

"The victorious army of the Apostolical and Roman Emperor is here: it fights only for the re-establishment of the holy religion, the clergy, the nobility, and the ancient government of Italy.

"People, join with us, for God and for the faith; for we have arrived with an army at Milan and Placentia to succour you."

The dearly-bought victories of Trebia and Novi succeeded that of Cassano, and left Suvarow so weakened, that he could not profit by his advantages. Besides, at the moment when the Russian general was going to resume his march, a new plan arrived, sent by the Aulic Council of Vienna. The allied powers had agreed on the invasion of France, and, allotting to each general the route he was to follow, had decided that Suvarow should enter France by Switzerland, and that the archduke should yield him his positions and descend on the Lower Rhine. The troops with which Suvarow, leaving Moreau and Macdonald before the Austrians, was henceforth to operate against Massena, were thirty thousand Russians whom he had with him under arms; thirty thousand more, detached from the army of reserve which Count Tolstoy commanded in Galicia, and were to be led into Switzerland by General Korsakoff; from twenty-five to thirty thousand Austrians, commanded by General Hotze; and, lastly, five or six thousand French emigrants, under the Prince de Condé; in all, ninety to ninety-five thousand men.

Fœdor had been wounded in entering Novi; but Suvarow had covered his wound with a second cross, and the rank of captain had hastened his convalescence, so that the young officer, more happy than proud of the new military grade he had achieved, was in a condition to follow the army, when, on the 18th of September, it commenced its movement towards Salvedra, and began to penetrate into the valley of Tesino.

All had gone well as yet; and while they remained in the rich and beautiful plains of Italy, Suvarow had every reason to be pleased with the courage and devotion of his soldiers. But when, to the fertile fields of

Lombardy, watered by beautiful rivers with soft names, succeeded the rough paths of the Levantine; and when, covered with eternal snows, the lofty summits of Saint Gothard rose before them, then their enthusiasm abated, their energy disappeared, and gloomy forebodings filled the hearts of those rude children of the North. Unexpected murmurs rose over the whole line, and suddenly the advanced guard halted, declaring it would not advance further. In vain Fœdor, who commanded a company, entreated and supplicated his soldiers to leave their comrades, and set the example by marching first; Fœdor's soldiers grounded their arms and lay down beside them. At the moment they gave this proof of their insubordination, new murmurs were heard from the rear of the army, approaching like a tempest; it was Suvarow, who was passing from the rear to the advanced guard, and who arrived, accompanied by this terrible proof of mutiny, which rose from the whole line as he passed along. When he reached the head of the column, these murmurs became imprecations.

Suvarow addressed his soldiers with that rude eloquence to which he owed the miracles he had effected with them. But the shouts of "Retreat! retreat!" drowned his voice. He picked out the most mutinous, and made them be beat till they sunk under this degrading punishment. But chastisement had no more influence than exhortation, and the cries continued. Suvarow saw that all was lost, if he did not employ some powerful and unexpected remedy. He advanced towards Fœdor.

"Captain," said he, "leave those fellows: take eight subalterns and dig a grave."

Fœdor, astonished, gazed at his general, as if to ask an explanation of this strange order.

"Do what I command," said Suvarow. Fœdor obeyed, the eight subalterns set to work, and in ten minutes afterwards the grave was dug, to the great astonishment of the whole army, who were drawn up in a semicircle on the slope of the two hills, which bounded the road, as if upon the steps of a vast amphitheatre.

Then Suvarow dismounted from his horse, drew his sabre, and threw it into the grave; he took off one after the other his epaulets, and threw them after his sabre; then he tore off the decorations which covered his breast; and at last, stripping himself naked, he lay down in it, crying in loud voice,

"Cover me with earth! leave your general here! You are no longer my children! I am no longer your father! it only remains for me to die!"

These strange words were pronounced in a voice so powerful, that they were heard by the whole army. The Russian grenadiers threw themselves weeping into the grave, and lifting up the general in their arms, begged his forgiveness, and besought him to lead them to the enemy.

"Now," cried Suvarow, "I know my children again. To the enemy! to the enemy!"

Deafening shouts answered this speech. Suvarow dressed himself again; and while he was doing so, the most mutinous, crawling in the dust, came to kiss his feet. When his epaulets were rebuttoned to his shoulders, and his brilliant crosses once more fastened to his breast, he remounted his horse, followed by the army, the soldiers swearing, with one voice, to die to the last man, rather than abandon their father.

The same day, Suvarow attacked Aerola. But the evil days were come, and the conqueror of Cassano, of Trebia, and of Novi, had left his good fortune in the plains of Italy. For twelve hours, six hundred French arrested three thousand Russian grenadiers under the walls of the town, so that night arrived without Suvarow being able to drive them out. Next day, he made the whole of his troops surround the handful of heroes; but the sky became overcast, and the wind began to blow a cold rain in the faces of the Russians. The French profited by this circumstance to retreat, evacuating the valley of Ursuren, passing the Reuss, and placed themselves in battle array on the heights of Fourca and Grimsel. But a part of the object of the Russian army was attained: St. Gothard was theirs. It was true that immediately on their leaving it behind, the French would retake it, and cut off their retreat. But what was that to Suvarow? was he not always accustomed to march forwards?

He marched on, then, without disquieting himself about what he left behind him; and, at last, found Lecombe guarding with fifteen hundred men the defiles of the Pont-au-Diable.

There the struggle recommenced: for three days fifteen hundred French stopped the progress of thirty thousand Russians. Suvarow raged like a lion caught in a net; he could not comprehend this change of fortune. At last, on the fourth day, he learnt that General Korsakoff, who had preceded him, and whom he was to join, had been defeated by Molitor, and that Massena had retaken Zurich, and occupied the canton of Glaris. He then gave up his route by the valley of Reuss, and wrote to Korsakoff and Jallachieh: "I hasten to repair your faults; be firm as rocks; you shall answer to me with your heads for every step you make to the rear." The aide-de-camp, besides, was charged to communicate to the Russian and Austrian generals a verbal plan of battle: Generals Linsken and Jallachieh were ordered to attack the French troops separately, and to effect their junction in the valley of Glaris, into which Suvarow himself was to descend by the Klon-Thal, to shut up Molitor between two walls of steel.

Suvarow was so sure that this plan would succeed, that, on his arrival at the banks of the lake of Klon-Thal, he sent a summons to Molitor to surrender, seeing that, as he said, he was surrounded on all sides. Molitor answered, that the meeting appointed by him with his generals had failed, as he had beaten them one after the other, and driven them into the Grisons; but that, on the contrary, as Massena was advancing by Muotta, it was he, Suvarow, who was between two fires; consequently, Molitor summoned him to lay down his arms.

When he heard this strange answer, Suvarow thought he was in a dream; but, recovering himself, and comprehending the danger of remaining in the defiles in which he then was, he precipitated himself on General Molitor, who received him at the point of the bayonet; and then, closing up the defiles, with twelve hundred men, he confined eighteen thousand Russians. At last, night coming on, Molitor evacuated the Klon-Thal, and retired on the Linth to defend the bridges of Nœfels and Mollis. The old marshal rushed like a torrent on Glaris and Mitlodi, and there he learnt that Molitor had told him the truth; that Jallachieh and Linsken had been beaten and dispersed; that Massena was advancing on Schwitz, and that general Rosemberg, to whom he had confided the defence of the bridge of Muotta, had been forced to fall back; so that he was really in the same position in which he believed he had placed Molitor.

There was no time to lose in beating a retreat. Suvarow threw himself into the defiles of Engi, of Schwauden and of Elm, hastening his march so much, that he abandoned his wounded and a part of his artillery. The French immediately rushed in pursuit, amid mountains and precipices. Whole armies were seen passing were chamois hunters were obliged to take their shoes from their feet. At last, Suvarow succeeded in rallying his troops in the environs of Lindau, and recalled Korsakoff, who still occupied the post of Bregenz; but all his troops united did not amount to more than thirty thousand men. These were the remains of the eighty thousand that Paul I. had furnished as his contingent in the coalition. In fifteen days three divisions of the army, each of which were more numerous than the whole army of Massena, had been beaten by that army. Suvarow, furious at having been beat by these same republicans whose extermination he had announced, threw upon the Austrians the blame of his defeat, and declared that he would wait, before undertaking any thing for the coalition, the orders of the emperor, whom he had made aware of the treachery of his allies.

The emperor's answer was, that he was to take, with his soldiers, the road to Russia, and himself to return as quickly as possible to St. Petersburg, where a triumphal entry awaited him. The same ukase bore, that Suvarow should be lodged for the rest of his life in the imperial palace, and that also a monument should be raised to him in one of the public places of St. Petersburg.

Fœdor was now to see Vaninka once more. Wherever there had been danger to be encountered, in the plains of Italy, in the defiles of Tesino, on the glaciers of Mount Pragel, he had been among the foremost; and, among the names mentioned as worthy of recompense, his was always found. He returned then, as he had promised, worthy of the friendship of his noble protector, and, who knows, perhaps of the love of Vaninka. Besides, the marshal had conceived a regard for him, and nobody could know to what the friendship of Suvarow might lead, whom Paul I. honoured like one of the ancient warriors.

But nobody could depend on Paul I., whose character was a compound of extreme impulses. Without having done any thing to offend his master, without knowing from whence the disgrace came, Suvarow received, on arriving at Riga, a letter from court, signifying to him, in the name of the emperor, that, having tolerated among his soldiers an infraction of a law of discipline, the emperor deprived him of all the honours with which he had invested him, and forbade him to appear before him.

This was a thunderbolt to the old warrior, already nearly heart-broken by the reverses he had experienced. He assembled all his officers in the market-place of Riga, and took a sorrowful farewell of them, like a father quitting his family. Throwing himself into a sledge, and travelling day and night, he arrived incognito in the capital, which he was to have entered in triumph; retired to the house of one of his nieces, in a distant quarter, where, a fortnight afterwards, he died of a broken-heart.

Fœdor had, on his part, travelled nearly as rapidly as his general, and, like him, entered St. Petersburg without any letter preceding him, or announcing his approach. As he had no relative in the capital, and, besides, as his whole existence was concentrated in one person, he drove straight to the general's house. He leaped from the carriage, flew into the courtyard, bounded up the steps, opened the door of the antechamber, and, coming unexpectedly into the midst of the servants and inferior officers of the household, who uttered a cry of surprise on perceiving who it was, asked where the general was. They answered by pointing to the door of the dining-room; he was there at breakfast with his daughter.

By a strange reaction, Fœdor felt his limbs fail him, and leaned against the wall to support himself. At the moment when he was to see Vaninka again, that life of his life, for whom alone he had done so much, he trembled lest he should not find her as he had quitted her. But the door of the room opened, and Vaninka appeared: perceiving the young man, she uttered a cry, and, turning back towards the general,—

"Father! it is Fœdor!" said she, with an expression which left no doubt of the sentiment which inspired it.

"Fœdor!" cried the general, rushing out and extending his arms.

Fœdor did not know whether to throw himself at the feet of Vaninka or on the bosom of her father; but, feeling that the first moment ought to be devoted to respect and gratitude, he threw himself into the general's arms. To do otherwise, was to avow his love; and had he the right to avow it without knowing if it was returned?

Fœdor then turned, and, as at parting, bent his knee before Vaninka; but a moment had sufficed for the haughty young maiden to calm the feelings she had experienced: the crimson blush that had passed over her face had disappeared, and she had become again cold and haughty like an alabaster statue. Fœdor kissed her hand; it was trembling and cold; Fœdor's heart failed, and the faintness of death came over him.

"Well, Vaninka," said the general, "why are you so cold to a friend who has given us so much terror and so much joy? Come, Fœdor, embrace my daughter."

Fœdor looked beseechingly, but remained motionless, waiting for another permission to confirm that of the general.

"Did you not hear my father?" said Vaninka, smiling, but unable to control the emotion which made her voice tremble.

Fœdor approached his lips to the cheek of Vaninka, and, as he held her hand, it appeared to him as if, by a nervous and involuntary movement, that hand had lightly pressed his own. A feeble cry of joy was nearly escaping his lips, when, casting his eyes upon Vaninka, he was in his turn frightened by her paleness; her lips were blanched like those of a corpse.

The general made Fœdor sit down at table. Vaninka resumed her place; and as by chance the light was behind her, the general, who had no suspicion, remarked nothing.

Breakfast, as may be imagined, passed in relating and hearing the details of the strange campaign, which had commenced under the burning sun of Italy, and had ended among the glaciers of Switzerland. As there are no journals at St. Petersburg which say any thing more than the emperor allows them, they had been apprized of the successes of Suvarow, but had remained ignorant of his reverses. Fœdor related the former with modesty, and the latter with frankness.

We may suppose the immense interest the general took in Fœdor's narrative. His captain's epaulets, his breast covered with decorations, proved that the young man was modestly forgetting himself in the recital he had made; but the general, too generous to fear partaking the disgrace of Suvarow, had already made a visit to the dying field-marshal, and had learned from him with what courage his young protégé had conducted himself. Fœdor's narration being finished, it was the general's turn to enumerate all the good he had heard of Fœdor, in a campaign of less than a year; he added, that the next day, he would go and ask the emperor's permission to take the young captain as his aide-de-camp. Fœdor, at these words, wished to throw himself at the general's knees, but he again received him in his arms; and, to give him a proof of his certainty of success, showed him, the same day, the apartment he was to occupy in the house.

Next day, the general returned from the palace of St. Michael, announcing the joyful news that his request had been granted.

Fœdor was at the height of happiness; from this time he was to make part of the general's family; to live under the same roof with Vaninka, to see her every hour, to meet her every instant, to be twice a day with her at the same table; this was more than Fœdor had ever dared to hope; he felt for a time, that he had attained the fulness of bliss.

For her part, Vaninka, proud as she was, had conceived a lively interest for Fœdor. He had departed leaving her the certainty that he loved her, and during his absence, her female pride was gratified by the glory the young officer had acquired, in the hope of removing the distance which separated him from her; so that when she had seen him return, with the distance between them thus lessened, she had felt by the beating of her heart, that her satisfied pride was changing into a more tender feeling. Still, however, she concealed these sentiments under the appearance of haughty indifference.

Things remained in this state for some months; and this condition, which had first appeared to Fœdor the height of happiness, soon became an intolerable torture. To love, and to feel his heart always on the point of avowing his love; to be morning and evening in her company, to sit by her side at table, to touch her robe in a narrow corridor, to feel her leaning on his arm in entering a saloon or leaving a ball-room, and to be constantly obliged to constrain every word, look, or movement, which might betray the emotions of his heart, was a trial too much for human strength. Vaninka saw well that Fœdor would not long have the resolution to keep his secret, and she determined to be beforehand with him in an avowal, which she saw was every moment on the point of escaping from his heart.

One day when they were alone, and when she saw the vain efforts which the young man made to hide his feelings from her, she went straight up to him, and looking at him tenderly, said,

"You love me, Fœdor?"

"Pardon! pardon!" cried the young man clasping his hands.

"Why do you ask my pardon, Fœdor,—is not your love pure?"

"Oh! yes! yes! my love is pure; the more so as it is hopeless."

"And why hopeless?" said Vaninka; "does not my father love you as a son?"

"Oh! do you tell me so?" cried Fœdor, "how, if your father would grant me your hand, would you then consent?"

"Are you not noble in heart and birth, Fœdor? you have no fortune, it is true, but I am rich enough for both."

"Am I then not indifferent to you?"

"At least, I prefer you to any one I have seen."

"Vaninka!" (The young lady made a movement of pride.) "Forgive me," said Fœdor, "what was I doing? command me; I have no will but yours; I fear to offend you,—guide me, I will obey."

"What you have to do, Fœdor, is to demand the consent of my father."

"What! you authorize me to do so?"

"Yes, but on one condition."

"What is it? Speak! oh, speak!"

"It is, that my father, whatever his answer may be, shall never learn that you present yourself before him with my authority; that nobody shall know that you follow instructions I have given you; that the whole world shall remain ignorant of the confession I have made you, and lastly, that you will not ask me, whatever happens, to second you, otherwise than by my wishes."

"Whatever you please," cried Fœdor; "oh! yes, I will do whatever you wish me! Have you not given me a thousand times more than I dared hope? and should your father refuse me,—well, do I not know, that you will share my grief?"

"Yes, but it will not be so, I hope," said Vaninka, holding out her hand to the young officer, which he kissed ardently, "come then, have hope and courage."

And so Vaninka departed, leaving, woman though she was, the young officer a hundred times more trembling and agitated than herself.

The same day Fœdor requested an interview with the general.

The general received his aide-de-camp, as he was accustomed to do, with an open and smiling countenance; but at the first words that Fœdor pronounced, his brow darkened. Nevertheless, at the picture of his love, so true, so constant, and so impassioned, which the young man felt for his daughter, the general, much moved, held out his hand to him, and told him, that during his absence, ignorant of the love he had carried away with him, and of which he had seen no sign in Vaninka, he had, at the emperor's desire, pledged his word to the son of the privy councillor. The only thing the general had asked, was, not to be separated from his daughter until she had attained the age of eighteen. Vaninka, therefore, still had more than five months to remain under the paternal roof.

In Russia the emperor's desire is an order, and the moment it is expressed, nobody dreams of opposing it. But this refusal had imprinted such despair on the face of the young man, that the general, touched by this silent and resigned sorrow, held out his arms to him. Fœdor, sobbing, threw himself into them. The general then questioned him about his daughter, but Fœdor answered, as he had promised, that the proposal came from him alone, without Vaninka's knowledge. This assurance made the general a little calmer; it relieved him of the dread of causing the misery of both.

At the dinner-hour Vaninka came down and found her father alone. Fœdor had not had the courage, at the moment he had just lost all hope, to meet the general and his daughter; he had taken a sledge, and driven to the environs of the city. During the whole time of dinner, the general and his daughter hardly exchanged a word; but however expressive this silence was, Vaninka commanded her countenance with her habitual power, and the general alone appeared sad and dejected.

In the evening, as she was going down, tea was brought up to her room, with a message, that the general, feeling himself fatigued, had retired to his apartment. Vaninka asked some questions about his indisposition; and having learned that it was not of consequence, she desired the servant, who brought the message, to convey to her father the expression of her respect, and to say, she put herself under his orders, if he had need of any thing. The general sent word that he thanked her, but had needed nothing but a little repose. Vaninka said she also was going to retire to rest, and the servant retired. Hardly was he gone, when Vaninka gave orders to Annouschka, her foster-sister, who acted as her attendant, to watch Fœdor's return, and to come and let her know as soon as he came home.

At eleven o'clock at night, Fœdor returned, and immediately went up to his room, where he threw himself on a sofa, oppressed by the weight of his own thoughts. In a few minutes, he heard a knock at the door. He got up surprised, and opened it. It was Annouschka, who came to tell him from her mistress that she wished to see him for a moment. However astonished he was by this message, which he was far from expecting, Fœdor obeyed.

He found Vaninka seated, and dressed in a white robe; and, as she was paler than usual, Fœdor stopped at the door, for it appeared to him he saw a marble statue.

"Come in," said Vaninka, in a voice in which it was impossible to discover the least emotion.

Fœdor approached; Annouschka closed the door behind him.

"Well!" said Vaninka, "how did my father answer you?"

Fœdor related all that had passed; the young maiden heard the recital with an unmoved countenance; her lips only became pale as the robe she wore. As to Fœdor, he was, on the contrary, consumed by fever, and appeared almost out of his senses.

"Well, what is your intention?" said Vaninka, in the same cold tone.

"You ask me, what is my intention, Vaninka! What do you wish me to do—what remains for me to do, unless it is, in order not to requite the kindness of my protector by some infamous baseness, to fly from St. Petersburg, and meet my death in the first corner of Russia where war breaks out?"

"You are a fool!" said Vaninka, with a smile, in which a singular mixture of triumph and contempt was observable; for, from this moment, she felt her superiority over Fœdor, and saw that she could govern him like a queen for the rest of his life.

"Then," cried the young officer, "guide me, command me; am not I your slave?"

"You must remain," said Vaninka.

"Remain!"

"Yes, it is womanly or childish to confess oneself vanquished the first blow; a man—if he really deserves the name,—a man will strive."

"Strive! and against whom?—against your father? Never!"

"Who speaks of striving against my father? It is against events we must strive, for the generality of men do not govern events, but, on the contrary, are hurried away by them. Have the air before my father of contending with your love, that he may believe you have overcome it; as I am supposed to be ignorant of your proposal; I shall not be suspected; I will ask two years, and shall obtain them. Who knows what may happen in two years? The emperor may die; he for whom I am destined may die; my father himself—and may God protect him—my father himself may die!"

"But if they insist?"

"If they insist!" interrupted Vaninka, a vivid blush mantling to her cheeks, and disappearing immediately; "and who then would insist on any thing from me? My father loves me too much for that; the emperor has disquiet enough in his own family: besides, there will always remain a last resource when all others fail; the Neva is at hand, and its waters are deep."

Fœdor uttered a cry; for in the knit brows and compressed lips of the young maiden, there was such an expression of resolution, that he saw she might be broken, but never bent.

However, Fœdor's heart was too much in harmony with Vaninka's sentiments to seek for new objections. Besides, had he had the courage to do so, Vaninka's promise to indemnify him in secret for the dissimulation he was obliged to practise in public, would have vanquished his last scruples. Vaninka, moreover, by her firm character, strengthened by her education, had an unbounded influence on all that surrounded her. Fœdor submitted like a child to all she desired, and the young girl's love was increased by the feeling of gratified pride.

It was some days after this nocturnal decision, resolved on in Vaninka's chamber, that Gregory underwent the punishment already described, for some trifling fault, on a complaint made by Vaninka to her father.

Fœdor, who, in his capacity of aide-de-camp, had the duty of presiding at the punishment of Gregory, had paid no attention to the threatening language which the slave had uttered on retiring. The coachman, Ivan, who, after having been executioner, had become surgeon, had made the usual application of salt and water to the patient's shoulders. Gregory remained in the infirmary three days, during which, he had turned in his mind every possible means of vengeance; then, as at the expiration of three days he was cured, he had resumed his service, and, except him, every one soon forgot what had passed. Had Gregory been a true Russian, he himself would have soon forgotten this punishment, too familiar to the rude children of Muscovy, for them to regard it with a long and rancorous remembrance. But Gregory had Greek blood in his veins; he dissembled and remembered.

Although Gregory was a slave, the functions he fulfilled for the general had gradually led to a greater familiarity than the other servants enjoyed; besides, in every country of the world, the barbers are privileged by those they shave. Gregory, then, enjoyed the immunities of his profession, and it almost always happened, that the barber's daily operation on the general's chin gave rise to a conversation in which he bore the chief part.

One day, when the general was going to a review, he had called Gregory before daybreak; and, as he was passing, as softly as possible, the razor over his cheek, the conversation fell, or more likely was led, on Fœdor, on whom the barber bestowed the greatest praise. This naturally led his master, who remembered the correction which he had made the young aide-de-camp administer to him, ask, if he could not find in this model of perfection some slight fault, which might counterbalance so many good qualities.

Gregory answered, that with the exception of pride, he believed Fœdor irreproachable.

"Pride?" asked the general, astonished; "that is the vice from which I believed him most exempt."

"I should have said ambition," replied Gregory.

"How, ambition?" continued the general; "but it appears to me that he has not given any proof of his ambition in entering my service; for after the manner he conducted himself, in the last campaign, he might easily have aspired to the honour of making part of the emperor's household."

"Oh! there is more than one kind of ambition," said Gregory, smiling; "some have ambition for high station, others for illustrious alliances; some wish to do every thing for themselves, others hope to make a footstool of their wives, and then they raise their eyes higher than they ought to do."

"What do you mean?" cried the general, beginning to see what Gregory was aiming at.

"I mean, your excellency," said Gregory, "that there are many people whom the kindness shown them encourages to forget their position—to aspire to a station more elevated, although they are already placed high enough to turn their heads."

"Gregory!" cried the general, "you are getting, believe me, into a bad scrape; for it is an accusation you make, and if I receive it as such, you will have to prove what you advance."

"By Saint Basilius! general, the scrape is not so bad when we have truth on our side; besides, I have said nothing that I am not ready to prove."

"So!" cried the general, "you persist in asserting that Fœdor loves my daughter?"

"Ah!" said Gregory, with the duplicity of his nation, "it is not I who say so: it is your excellency. I did not name the lady Vaninka."

"But that is what you meant, is it not? Come, contrary to your custom, answer frankly."

"It is true, your excellency, it is what I meant."

"And, according to you, my daughter returns his love?"

"I fear it, for her sake and yours, your excellency."

"And what makes you think so? Speak."

"First, Mr. Fœdor never lets an occasion pass to speak with the lady Vaninka."

"He is in the same house with her; would you have him avoid her?"

"When the lady Vaninka comes home late, and if, by chance, Mr. Fœdor has not accompanied you; whatever hour it may be, Mr. Fœdor is there to give her his arm to conduct her from the carriage."

"Fœdor waits for me, and it is his duty," said the general, beginning to believe that the suspicions of the slave were founded on light appearances; "he waits for me, because, at any hour of the day or night, when I return, I may have orders to give him."

"There does not a day pass, but Mr. Fœdor goes into lady Vaninka's room, although such a favour is not usually granted to a young man in a house like that of your excellency."

"Mostly it is I who send him," said the general.

"Yes, in the day," answered Gregory; "but—the night?"

"The night!" cried the general, starting up, and turning so pale, that he was forced to lean on a table for support.

"Yes, the night, your excellency," answered Gregory, quietly, "and since I have got, as you say into a bad affair, I must go on with it; besides, I ought to suffer a worse punishment than what I received, if I suffered so good a master to be longer deceived."

"Pay attention to what I am going to say, slave; for I know your nation; and take care, if the accusation you make from revenge, does not rest on visible proofs, palpable and positive, you shall be punished like an infamous calumniator."

"I agree to it," answered Gregory.

"And you say you have seen Fœdor enter my daughter's chamber by night?"

"I do not say that I have seen him enter it, your excellency, I say that I have seen him come out of it."

"And when?

"About a quarter of an hour ago, on my way to your excellency."

"You lie!" said the general, raising his fist.

"That is not our agreement, your excellency," replied the slave, drawing back, "I am not to be punished, unless I fail in my proofs."

"But your proofs, what are they?"

"I have told you."

"And you expect me to believe your word?"

"No! but I expect you to believe your eyes."

"And how?"

"The first time Mr. Fœdor is in your daughter's room after midnight, I will come and seek your excellency, and then you can judge for yourself if I lie; but at present, your excellency, all the conditions of the service that I am to render you, are to my disadvantage."

"How?"

"Why, if I cannot give proofs, I am to be treated as an infamous calumniator, so far well; but if I give them, what advantage shall I gain?"

"A thousand rubles, and your freedom."

"It is a bargain, your excellency," answered Gregory, calmly replacing the razors in the general's toilet-table as he spoke; "and I trust, that within one week, you will do me more justice than you do me now."

So saying, he left the room, leaving the general under the conviction that he was threatened by some terrible misfortune.

Our readers will readily believe, that from this moment the general listened to every word, and watched every gesture, which passed between Vaninka and Fœdor; but neither from the aide-de-camp, nor from his daughter, could any thing be discovered, tending to confirm his suspicions; on the contrary, Vaninka seemed to be colder and more reserved than ever.

In this manner the week passed. About two o'clock in the morning, of the ninth day, the general was awoke by some one knocking at his door; it was Gregory.

"If your excellency will go to your daughter's room," said he, "Mr. Fœdor will be found with her."

The general turned pale, dressed himself without speaking a word, followed the slave as far as Vaninka's door, and dismissed him with a motion of his hand. Instead of retiring, however, in obedience to his master's mute command, he hid himself in a corner of the corridor.

As soon as the general thought himself alone, he knocked once at the door, but all remained silent; this silence, however, indicated nothing, for Vaninka might be asleep. He knocked again, and the calm voice of the young girl was heard inquiring,

"Who is there?"

"It is I," said the general, in a voice trembling with emotion.

"Annouschka," said the girl, speaking to her foster-sister, who slept in the adjoining room, "open the door to my father. Forgive me," she added; "but Annouschka is dressing, and will admit you immediately."

The general waited patiently; for he could discover no trace of emotion in his daughter's voice, and he trusted that Gregory was mistaken.

In a few moments the door was opened, and the general, casting a long and eager look around him, entered the room; there was no person in the first apartment.

Vaninka lay, paler perhaps than usual, but perfectly calm, and having the filial smile upon her lips, with which she always received her father.

"To what fortunate circumstance," inquired the young girl in her softest tones, "am I indebted for the pleasure of seeing you at so late an hour of the night?"

"I wish to speak to you upon a matter of importance," said the general, "and whatever the time, I believed that you would forgive me, for disturbing you."

"My father will be always welcome in his daughter's room, at whatever hour of the day or night he thinks proper to be admitted."

The general cast another searching look around him, and was convinced of the impossibility of a man's being concealed in the first room; but the second still remained.

"I listen to you," said Vaninka, after a moment's silence.

"Yes, but we are not alone," replied the general, "and it is of importance that no other ears but yours, should hear that which I have to say."

"Annouschka is, as you know, my foster-sister," said Vaninka.

"No matter," replied the general; and taking a light in his hand, he passed into the next room, which was considerably smaller than his daughter's.

"Annouschka," said he, "wait in the passage, and see that no one overhears us."

While saying these words, the general's eyes were wandering eagerly round the room; but so far, all was well, the young girl being the sole tenant of the room. Annouschka obeyed, and the general, after casting a last look around him, re-entered his daughter's room, and seated himself upon the foot of her bed: as to Annouschka, upon a sign which her mistress made to her, she left her alone with her father. The general held out his hand to Vaninka, which she took without hesitation.

"My child," said the general, "I have something of importance to say to you."

"What is it, my father?" inquired Vaninka.

"You are now almost eighteen," continued the general, "at which age the daughters of the Russian nobility are usually married." The general paused a moment, to watch what effect these words would have upon Vaninka: but her hand remained motionless in his. "Your hand has been engaged for the last twelve months," he added.

"May I know to whom?" inquired Vaninka, coldly.

"To the son of ——," replied the general. "What is your opinion of him?"

"He is a noble and worthy young man, as I am informed," said Vaninka; "but I can form no other opinion than from what others have told me. Has he not been in garrison at Moscow the last three months?"

"Yes," said the general; "but in three more he will return."

Vaninka remained silent.

"Have you no answer to make me?" inquired the general.

"No, my father, but I have a boon to beg of you."

"What is it?"

"That I am not asked in marriage until I shall have attained the age of twenty."

"And why?"

"I have taken a vow to that effect."

"But if circumstances demanded that this vow should be broken, and rendered the immediate celebration of the marriage imperatively necessary?"

"What circumstances do you speak of?" inquired Vaninka.

"Fœdor loves you," said the general, gazing earnestly at her.

"I know it," answered the young girl, with as much tranquillity as if the question had not concerned her.

"You know it?" cried the general.

"Yes, he told me so."

"And when?"

"Last night."

"And you answered him—"

"That he must immediately leave this place."

"And did he consent?"

"He did, my father."

"When does he go?"

"He is gone."

"How can that be," said the general, "when he only left me at ten o'clock."

"He left me, my father, at midnight."

"Ah!" ejaculated the general, breathing for the first time, "you are a good child, Vaninka, and I grant you what you ask. But remember, that this marriage was decided upon by the emperor."

"My father will do me the justice to believe, that I am too submissive a daughter to prove a rebellious subject."

"Excellent! Vaninka, excellent!" said the general. "So, then, poor Fœdor has told you all."

"Yes," said Vaninka.

"You knew then, that he applied to me, in the first instance?"

"I knew it."

"It was from him, then, that you learned, that your hand was engaged?"

"True; it was from him."

"And he consented to go? He is a good and noble young man, and my protection shall follow him wherever he goes. Oh! had not my word been passed, I should love him so well," continued the general, "that, supposing you to have no repugnance to him, upon my honour, I should have given him your hand."

"And cannot your word be recalled?" inquired Vaninka.

"Impossible," said the general.

"Well, then, I must submit to my father's will."

"That is spoken like my daughter," said the general, embracing her. "Adieu! Vaninka. I do not ask you if you love him. You have done your duty to both, and I have nothing more to exact."

So saying he rose and left the room. Annouschka was waiting in the passage, the general made a sign to her that she might go in, and went on. He found Gregory waiting for him at the door of his room.

"Well, your excellency?" inquired the slave.

"Well," said the general, "you are both right and wrong: Fœdor loves my daughter, but my daughter loves not him. Fœdor was with my daughter at eleven o'clock, but at midnight he left her for ever. No matter, come to me to-morrow, and you shall have your thousand rubles and your liberty."

Gregory went away stupified with astonishment.

During this time, Annouschka had re-entered her mistress's room, and closed the door carefully behind her. Vaninka immediately leapt out of bed, and, approaching this door, she listened to the general's retreating steps, until they ceased to be heard. She then ran into Annouschka's room, and both began throwing aside a large bundle of wool, which had been thrown, as if by accident, into the embrasure of a window. Beneath this wool was a large chest, which Annouschka unfastened, and Vaninka raised the cover. The two women immediately uttered a loud shriek: the chest was now a coffin; for the young officer, stifled for want of air, lay dead within.

For a long time they hoped he had but swooned. Annouschka sprinkled his face with water, while Vaninka put salts to his nose. All was in vain. During the long conversation which the general had had with his daughter, and which had lasted upwards of half-an-hour, Fœdor, unable to get out of the chest, owing to its being locked, had died, as we have said, for want of air.

The position of the two unhappy girls, shut up with a corpse, was frightful. Annouschka had visions of Siberia in perspective: Vaninka, to do her justice, thought of nothing but Fœdor.

Both of them were, of course, in despair. Nevertheless, the despair of the waiting-woman being more selfish than that of the mistress, it was Annouschka who first thought of a plan of escaping from the situation in which both were placed.

"My lady!" she suddenly cried, "we are saved!"

Vaninka raised her head, and gazed at her attendant with tearful eyes.

"Saved!" cried she, "saved! we perhaps may be so; but Fœdor—"

"Listen," said Annouschka; "your situation is terrible, and, I confess, that your misfortune is great; but both your misfortune and your situation may be much worse. If the general should know of this—"

"And what matters it to me?" said Vaninka: "I have now nothing left but to weep."

"Yes; but you will be dishonoured! To-morrow your slaves, and, the day after, all St. Petersburg, will know, that a man died of suffocation, while concealed in your sleeping-room. Reflect, my lady, your honour is also that of your father, and of your family."

"You are right," said Vaninka, shaking her head, as if to dissipate the gloomy reflections which burdened it, "you are right; what must we do?"

"You know my brother, Ivan."

"Yes."

"He must be told all."

"Of what are you thinking?" cried Vaninka, "confide in a man! a serf, a slave!"

"The lower the man," replied the attendant, "the safer is our secret, since he will only gain by its preservation."

"Your brother is a drunkard," said Vaninka, with fear mingled with disgust.

"It is true," answered Annouschka; "but where will you find a bearded man who is not? My brother is better than most of them: he is therefore better to be trusted than the others; besides, in the situation in which we are, some risk must be run."

"You are right," replied Vaninka, recovering her resolution, "go for your brother."

"Nothing can be done this morning," said Annouschka, drawing aside one of the window-curtains, "look, the day is breaking."

"But what is to be done with this unfortunate man's body?" cried Vaninka.

"It must remain concealed where it is during the day, and this evening, while you are absent at the court entertainment, my brother shall convey it hence."

"True, true," murmured Vaninka, wildly, "I must go to the court this evening: to stay would excite suspicion. Oh! my God! my God!—"

"Assist me, my lady," said Annouschka, "my single strength is not sufficient."

Vaninka grew deadly pale; but knowing the necessity of resolution, she walked firmly to her lover's corpse; and taking it up by the shoulders while the attendant raised it by the legs, it was once more placed in the chest. The cover was closed, the chest locked, and Annouschka deposited the key in her bosom.

The wool which had hidden the chest from the general's view, was again thrown over it, and no outward signs remained of the frightful catastrophe which had taken place.

It will be believed, that no sleep visited Vaninka upon that morning. She came down however, at the breakfast-hour, that her father might not have reason to suspect that any thing was amiss. Nevertheless, from her deadly paleness, she might have been supposed to have risen from the grave; but the general attributed this circumstance to the disturbance of her slumbers, of which he had been the cause.

Chance had been of great service to Vaninka, in making her assert that Fœdor was already gone; for not only did the general feel no surprise at his not making his appearance, but his very absence was a proof of his daughter's innocence. The general gave a reason for his aide-de-camp's absence, by saying that he had sent him upon a mission. As to Vaninka, she kept out of her room, until it was time to dress. Eight hours before, she had been at the court entertainment with Fœdor.

Vaninka might have excused herself from accompanying her father, by feigning indisposition; but she had two reasons for fearing to make such an excuse: the first, was the dread of making the general anxious, and perhaps keeping him also at home, which would have rendered the removal of the corpse much more difficult; the second, the fear of meeting Ivan, and being forced to blush before a slave. She therefore preferred making the effort, great as it was, and going up into her room, accompanied by her faithful Annouschka, she began to prepare herself for going to court, with as much care as if her heart had been filled with joy.

When this dreadful task was finished, she ordered Annouschka to shut the door; for she wished once more to see Fœdor, and to take a last farewell of him who had been her betrothed. Annouschka obeyed, and Vaninka, her hair covered with flowers, her bosom decorated with pearls and precious stones, but under all, colder and more icy than a statue, advanced like a phantom towards the chamber of her attendant. Annouschka again opened the chest; and Vaninka, without dropping a tear or uttering a sigh, but with the quiet and profound calmness of despair, leant down towards Fœdor, took a plain ring that the young man had on his finger, and placed it on her own, then imprinting a kiss on his forehead, she said, "Adieu, my betrothed."

At this moment she heard steps approaching. A valet-de-chambre came to inquire from the general, if she was ready; Annouschka let the lid of the chest fall, and Vaninka followed the messenger who went before her, while, confiding in her foster-sister, she left her to accomplish the dark and terrible task with which she was charged.

An instant after, Annouschka saw the carriage which contained the general and his daughter, leave the gate of the hotel. She let half an hour pass, and then went down to seek Ivan. She found him drinking with Gregory, with whom the general had kept his word, and who had received the same day a thousand rubles, and his liberty. Happily the revellers had not gone far in their jollity, and Ivan's head was clear enough not to make his sister hesitate to trust him with her secret.

Ivan followed Annouschka to the chamber of her mistress; there she reminded him of all that Vaninka, generous though haughty, had permitted her to do for him. The few glasses of *eau-de-vie* that Ivan had already swallowed, had predisposed him to gratitude: (the drunkenness of the Russians is essentially tender,) Ivan protested his devotion so warmly, that Annouschka did not hesitate longer, and raising the lid of the chest, showed him the corpse of Fœdor.

At this terrible apparition, Ivan remained an instant motionless, but soon began to calculate how much gold and how many benefits the knowledge of such a secret would bring him. He therefore swore the most solemn oaths, never to betray his mistress, and as Annouschka had hoped, offered to conceal the body of the unfortunate aide-de-camp.

The thing was easy: in place of returning to drink with Gregory and his comrade, Ivan went and prepared a sledge, filled it with straw, concealed a crow-bar in the bottom of it, brought it to the gate, and being assured that he was observed by no one, he carried in his arms the dead man's body, hid it under the straw, sat down above it, caused the gate of the hotel to be opened, drove his sledge to the Neva, and stopped in the middle of the frozen river, in front of the deserted church of St. Madeleine. He then, favoured by the darkness, and concealed behind the sledge, began with his bar to attack the ice, eighteen inches thick, and when a large opening had been made, and after he had searched Fœdor, and possessed himself
that was about him, he slipped him head foremost under
k the road back to the hotel, while the current of the Neva
se towards the Gulf of Finland.

, the wind had formed a new crust of ice, and there did
a trace of the opening which Ivan had made.

Vaninka returned with her father. A hidden fever had preyed upon her all the evening; so that she had never appeared so beautiful, and she had been incessantly besieged with the homage of the most distinguished and gallant noblemen of the court.

She found Annouschka in the vestibule. She waited to take off her mistress's cloak. Vaninka questioned her with a look.

"It is done," said the girl, in a low voice.

Vaninka breathed as if a mountain had been removed from her breast.

Whatever power Vaninka had over herself she could not longer bear the presence of her father, and excused herself from supping with him, under the pretence of fatigue.

Vaninka was no sooner in her room and the door closed, than she tore the flowers from her hair, the necklace from her throat, cut with scissors the corset which suffocated her, and throwing herself on her bed, gave vent to her agony. Annouschka thanked God for this burst of feeling; her mistress's calmness had frightened her more than her despair.

This first crisis past, Vaninka could pray.

She passed an hour on her knees, and then, at the request of her faithful attendant, went to bed. Annouschka sat down at the foot of the bed; neither slept, but at least, when day came, Vaninka's tears had calmed her.

Annouschka was charged to recompense her brother. Too large a sum given at once to a slave would have been remarked. Annouschka, therefore, contented herself with saying to him, that when he had need of money, he had only to ask her for it.

Gregory profiting by his liberty, and wishing to turn his thousand roubles to account, bought a little tavern, where, thanks to his address, and to the acquaintance he had among the servants of the first families of St. Petersburg, he began to carry on an excellent business; so that in time the Red House, for that was the name and the colour of Gregory's establishment, got into great repute. Another slave fulfilled his duties at the general's, and, but for the absence of Fœdor, all went on in the usual order at Count Tchermayloff's.

Two months had elapsed without any body conceiving the least suspicion of what had happened; when one morning, before the usual breakfast-hour, the general sent a request to his daughter to come down to him. Vaninka trembled with fear, for since that fatal night every thing had become the subject of terror to her. She obeyed her father, however, and collecting all her strength, she went to his cabinet. The count was alone, but at the first glance, Vaninka saw she had nothing to fear in this interview: the general was waiting for her with that paternal smile which his countenance always wore when with his daughter. She approached, therefore, with her habitual calmness, and stooping down towards the general, gave him her forehead to kiss.

He told her to sit down, and presented her with an open letter. Vaninka, surprised, looked at him for an instant, and then turned her eyes to the letter: it contained the news of the death of the man to whom she had been engaged. He had been killed in a duel.

The general watched the effect of the letter on the face of his daughter, and, however much power Vaninka had over herself, so many different thoughts, such bitter regret, such poignant remorse, assailed her on learning that she was free, that she could not dissemble her emotion. The general perceived, and attributed it to the love which he long since suspected his daughter felt for the young aide-de-camp.

"Well," said he, smiling, "I see that all is for the best."

"How, my father?" asked Vaninka.

"Doubtless," said the general, "has not Fœdor banished himself because he loves you?"

"Yes," murmured the young girl.

"Well; now he must return," said the general.

Vaninka remained mute, her eyes fixed, and her lips trembling.

"Return!" said she, after an instant's silence.

"Certainly, return! We shall either have very bad luck," continued the general smiling, "or we shall soon find some one in the house who knows where he is hid. Tell me then, Vaninka, tell me the place of his exile, and I take upon myself to do the rest."

"Nobody knows where Fœdor is," murmured Vaninka, in a hollow voice; "nobody, but God—nobody."

"What!" cried the general, "has he sent no account of himself since the day he disappeared?"

Vaninka shook her head, in sign of denial; her heart was so crushed, she could not speak. The general became grave in his turn.

"Do you fear some misfortune then?" said he.

"I fear there is no more happiness for me on this earth," cried Vaninka, giving way to the violence of her grief; when, immediately—"Let me withdraw, my father," continued she, "I am ashamed of what I have said."

The general, who only saw in the exclamation of Vaninka, the regret of having let the avowal of her love escape her, kissed his daughter's forehead, and allowed her to retire, hoping, in spite of the gloomy air with which Vaninka had spoke of Fœdor, that it was possible to find him. The same day the general went to the emperor, told him of the love of Fœdor for his daughter, and requested, since death had freed her of her first engagement, that he might dispose of her hand. The emperor consented; and the general then solicited a new favour. Paul was in one of his fits of benevolence, and showed himself disposed to grant it. The general said, that for two months, Fœdor had disappeared, and that nobody, not even his daughter, knew where he was, and besought the emperor to order search to be made for him. The emperor sent for the chief of the police, and gave the necessary orders.

Six weeks passed by without leading to any result. Vaninka, since the day of the letter, was more melancholy and gloomy than ever; vainly from time to time did the general endeavour to inspire her with some hope, Vaninka only shook her head and retired. The general ceased to speak of Fœdor.

But it was not so in the house. The young aide-de-camp was beloved by the domestics; and when they learned that he had not been sent on a mission by the general, but had disappeared, the matter became the constant subject of conversation in the antechamber, the kitchen, and the stables.

There was also another place where it was much discussed—the Red House.

Since the day when he had heard of this mysterious departure, Gregory had his suspicions. He was sure of having seen Fœdor enter Vaninka's chamber, and, unless he had gone out when he went to seek the general, he could not comprehend how it happened that the general had not found him with his daughter. One thing also appeared to him to have perhaps a coincidence with this event; the expenses, namely, that Ivan had incurred since that time,—expenses which were very extraordinary in a slave. But this slave was the brother of Vaninka's cherished foster-sister; so that, without being sure, Gregory suspected the source from whence the money came. Another thing confirmed him in his suspicions, which was, that Ivan, who had remained not only his faithful friend, but even one of his best customers, never spoke of Fœdor, remained silent when others spoke of him before him, and, if he was questioned, never made other reply, however pressing the question might be, than this laconic one: "Let us speak of something else."

In the mean time the Feast of Kings arrived. This is a great day in St. Petersburg, for it is also the day of the blessing of the waters. As Vaninka had been present at the ceremony, and was fatigued with standing for two hours on the Neva, the general did not go out that evening, and gave Ivan leave to do so: Ivan profited by the permission, to go to the Red House.

There was much company at Gregory's, and Ivan was most welcome to the worshipful society; for they knew that he generally came with full pockets, and this time he did not belie his custom.

The conversation turned on slavery, and some of these unfortunate people, who hardly had four days in the year to rest from their eternal labour, talked of the happiness that Gregory enjoyed since he had obtained his freedom.

"Bah!" said Ivan, on whom the brandy had begun to take effect, "there are some slaves who are freer than their masters."

"What do you mean by that?" said Gregory, handing him another glass.

"I mean happier," replied Ivan, warmly.

"That is difficult to prove," said Gregory, doubtingly.

"Why so? Our masters—hardly is one of them born, than he is put into the hands of two or three pedants,—the one French, the other German, the third English,—whether he likes them or not, he must remain in their society till sevénteen, and must learn three barbarous languages at the expense of our noble Russian tongue, which is sometimes completely forgotten before the others are acquired. Then, if he wishes to be any body, he must become a soldier: if he is sub-lieutenant he is slave to the lieutenant; if he is lieutenant he is slave to the captain; if he is captain he is slave to the major; and that goes on until you come to the emperor, who is slave to nobody, but whom, one fine day, they surprise at table, at his walk, or in his bed, and then they poison, poniard, or strangle him. If he become a civilian, it is much the same thing: he marries a wife and does not love her; children come to him he does not know how, whom he must take care of; he must struggle incessantly, if poor, to support his family; if rich, to prevent being robbed by his agent, and cheated by his tenants. A pretty life! As to us, why, we are born, and that is the only pain we cost our mother, the rest concerns the master. It is he who feeds us; it is he who chooses our calling, always easy enough to learn, if we are not quite idiots. Are we ill? his doctor attends us gratis; for it would be a loss to him if we were to die. Are we well? we have our four meals a day. In short, we have every thing we want; and you'll find very few great lords as happy as their slaves."

"Yes, yes," said Gregory, pouring him out another glass; "but, after all, you are not free."

"Free to do what?"

"Free to go where you will and when you will."

"I am free as air," answered Ivan.

"Nonsense!" said Gregory.

"Free as air, I tell thee; for I have good masters, and, above all, a good mistress," continued Ivan, with a mysterious smile; "and what is more, I have only to demand, and it is done."

"What is done? If, after having got drunk here to-day, you asked to come back and get drunk here to-morrow," replied Gregory, who did not forget his own interests; "if you asked that—"

"I should come back," said Ivan.

"To-morrow?"

"To-morrow—next day—every day if I liked."

"The fact is, Ivan is the young lady's favourite," said another of the count's slaves, who was present.

"That's all one," said Gregory: "supposing that they did give you leave, your cash would soon run short."

"Never!" said Ivan, swallowing another glass of spirits; "Ivan will never want money, while there is a kopeck in my young lady's purse."

"I did not think her so liberal," said Gregory, sharply.

"Oh! you forget, friend! for you know well she does not reckon with her friends: witness the strokes of the knout."

"I was not talking about that," replied Gregory: "of blows, I know well she is liberal enough; but her money is another thing; for I have never even seen the colour of it."

"Well! would you like to see the colour of mine?" said Ivan, becoming more and more fuddled; "there! here are kopecks, here are sorok-kopecks, here are blue notes worth five roubles, here are red notes worth five-and-twenty; and to-morrow, if you will, I shall show you white notes worth fifty. To the health of my lady Vaninka!" and Ivan held out his glass again, which Gregory filled to the brim.

"But money," said Gregory, "does money make up for scorn?"

"Scorn!" said Ivan; "scorn! who scorns me? It is you, because you are free! Fine freedom! I had rather be a comfortable slave than a free man starving."

"I meant the scorn of our masters," replied Gregory.

"The scorn of our masters! Ask Alexis, ask Daniel, there, if my lady scorns me."

"The fact is," said the two slaves, who were both of the general's household, "Ivan must have a charm; for he is never spoken to but like a nobleman."

"Because he is Annouschka's brother, and Annouschka is the lady's foster-sister."

"It may be so," said the two slaves.

"Either for that or something else," said Ivan; "but, in short, that is the case."

"Yes; but if your sister should die?" said Gregory—"Ah!"

"If my sister should die!" replied Ivan; "that would be a pity, because she is a good girl.—My sister's health! But if she should die, that would make no difference. I am respected for myself: some folks respect me because they are afraid of me. There!"

"Afraid of Master Ivan?" said Gregory, with a loud laugh. "It follows then, if Master Ivan were weary of receiving orders, and wanted to give them in his turn, Master Ivan would be obeyed."

"Perhaps!" said Ivan.

"He says, perhaps!" repeated Gregory, laughing more and more; "he says, perhaps! Did you hear him?"

"Yes," said the slaves, who had drunk so much that they could only answer in monosyllables.

"Well! I won't say, perhaps, any more; I now say—for certain!"

"Ah! I should like to see that," said Gregory; "I would give something to see that."

"Well, send away those fellows, who are drinking like swine, and you shall see it for nothing."

"For nothing," said Gregory; "you jest! Do you think I give them drink for nothing?"

"Well! we shall see: how much would be their score for your villanous brandy, if they were to drink till midnight, when you must shut up your house?"

"Not much less than twenty roubles."

"There are thirty: turn them out, and let us remain by ourselves."

"My friends," said Gregory, pulling out his watch, "it is just upon midnight, and you know the governor's orders, therefore you must go."

The Russians, accustomed to passive obedience, retired without a murmur, and Gregory was alone with Ivan and the two other slaves of the general.

"Well, now we are alone," said Gregory; "what do you mean to do?"

"Why, what would you say," replied Ivan, "if, in spite of the late hour, in spite of the cold, and, although we are only slaves, my lady should quit her father's house, and come and drink our healths?"

"I would say that you ought to profit by it," answered Gregory, shrugging his shoulders; "and tell her to bring, at the same time, a bottle of brandy; there is probably better in the general's cellar than in mine."

"There is better," said Ivan, as if he was perfectly sure of it, "and she shall bring you a bottle."

"You are drunk!" said Gregory.

"He is drunk!" repeated the two slaves, mechanically.

"Ah! I am drunk!" said Ivan; "well, will you bet?"

"What will you bet?"

"Two hundred roubles against a year's drinking here at discretion."

"Done!" said Gregory.

The two betters shook hands and the affair was concluded. Ivan then took his furred cloak, wrapped himself in it, and went away. In half an hour he reappeared.

"Well?" cried Gregory and the slaves at once.

"She follows me," said Ivan.

The three drinkers looked at each other in amazement, but Ivan quietly sat down, and filling a fresh bumper, and raising his glass,—

"My lady's health," he said; "it is the least we can do for her complaisance in coming to join us in so cold a night, and when the snow falls so fast."

"Annouschka," said a voice outside, "knock at that door, and ask Gregory if he has not some of our people with him?"

Gregory and the two slaves looked at each other stupified; they knew Vaninka's voice; as for Ivan, he threw himself back in his chair with an air of self-satisfied importance. Annouschka opened the door, and they could see, as Ivan had said, the snow falling in huge flakes.

"Yes, madam," said the girl; "there is my brother, and Daniel, and Alexis."

Vaninka entered.

"My friends," she said, with a strange smile, "I am told you have been drinking my health, and I bring you something to enable you to drink it again. Here is a bottle of old French brandy, which I have taken for you from my father's cellar. Let me fill your glasses."

Gregory and the two slaves obeyed with the slowness and hesitation of astonishment, while Ivan put forward his glass with the utmost effrontery. Vaninka filled them herself to the brim, and, as they hesitated to drink:

"Come, drink to my health, my friends!" said she.

"Hurrah!" cried the revellers, and, reassured by the noble visiter's gentle and familiar tone, they emptied their glasses.

Vaninka poured them out each another glass, and placed the bottle on the table.

"Empty that bottle, my friends," said she, "and do not mind me; Annouschka and I will sit by the stove until the storm is over."

Gregory endeavoured to rise to place stools by the stove, but fell back on the bench, attempting, but in vain, to stammer out an excuse.

"Never mind, never mind," said Vaninka; "let no one disturb himself. Drink, my friends, drink."

The revellers profited by this permission, and each emptied the contents of his glass. Hardly had Gregory drained his than he fell forward on the table.

"'Tis well," said Vaninka, in a low voice to her attendant, "the opium has done its work."

"But what do you mean to do?" asked Annouschka.

"You will see immediately."

The two slaves lost no time in following the example of the master of the house, and fell, side by side, upon the ground. Ivan was the last who remained awake, endeavouring to sing a drinking song, but, in a short time, his tongue refused its office; his eyes closed in spite of his efforts to keep them open, and, while seeking to remember the tune which he had been singing, and muttering words which he could not pronounce, he fell fast asleep by the side of his comrades.

Vaninka rose, and looked at them with fixed and flashing eyes. She called them, one after the other, by their names, but without receiving any answer. Then, clapping her hands together exultingly—

"The moment is come," she said; and going four times to the bottom of the room, she took up, at each, an armful of straw, which she deposited at the corners of the apartment, and, drawing a burning log from the stove, she set fire successively to the four corners of the room.

"What are you doing?" cried Annouschka, in the greatest terror, and endeavouring to stop her hand.

"I am burying our secret beneath the ashes of this house," cried Vaninka.

"But my brother! my poor brother!" cried the girl.

"Your brother is a wretch, who would have betrayed us; and we are lost if we do not destroy him."

"Oh, my brother! my poor brother!"

"You can die with him if you like," said Vaninka, accompanying this proposition with a smile, which showed that she would not have been sorry had Annouschka carried her sisterly love to that extremity.

"But the house is on fire, madam! the house is on fire!"

"Let us go then," cried Vaninka; and drawing away the weeping girl, she locked the door behind her, and threw the key as far as she could into the snow.

"In the name of heaven, let us get home quietly," cried Annouschka. "Oh! I cannot look upon this fearful sight!"

"Let us stay where we are," said Vaninka, holding back her attendant with an almost masculine grasp, "let us stay until that house falls in upon them, so that we may be certain that none of them escape."

"O my God!" cried Annouschka, falling upon her knees, "have pity upon my poor brother, who is hurried so unprepared into thy presence!"

"Yes, yes, pray; that is right," said Vaninka, "it is their bodies only I would destroy, not their souls. Pray; I permit you."

And Vaninka stood motionless, with her arms crossed, gazing on the blaze of the burning house, while her attendant knelt and prayed.

The conflagration did not last long: the house was of wood, like those of all the Russian peasantry; so that the flames appeared at the four corners, and spread rapidly to all parts of the building. Vaninka looked upon the progress of the destroying element with an anxious eye, trembling in the constant expectation of seeing some half burnt spectre rush out of the flames. At last the roof fell in, and Vaninka, relieved from all fear, retraced her way to the general's house, into which, from the power which Annouschka possessed of going out at all hours, the two females entered without being observed.

The next day, St. Petersburg was filled with the report of the burning of the Red House. Four half consumed corpses had been dug from the ruins, and, as three of the general's slaves were missing, no doubt existed on his mind, that three of these corpses were those of Ivan, Daniel, and Alexis; as to the fourth, he was certain that it was that of Gregory.

The causes of the fire remained a secret to every one. The house was solitary, and the snow drifted so violently, that, upon the deserted road, no one had met the two women. Vaninka was sure of her attendant. Her secret had died with Ivan. But now remorse took the place of fear. The young girl, so inflexible in the execution of the deed, quailed before its remembrance; she reflected, that by revealing the secret of her crime to the priest, she would be lightened of her frightful burden. She resorted to an ecclesiastic, highly respected for his piety and charity, and related to him, under the seal of confession, all that had passed.

The priest was horrified at the recital. Divine mercy is boundless, but human forgiveness has its limits. The priest refused Vaninka the absolution she prayed for.

This refusal was terrible; it banished Vaninka from the holy table, and this absence would be remarked, and it could only be attributed to some unheard of and secret guilt.

Vaninka fell at the feet of the priest, and in the name of her father, upon whom her shame would bring misery and dishonour, beseeched him to mitigate the rigour of this sentence.

The priest reflected profoundly, and thought he had found a means to prevent such consequences; this was, that Vaninka should approach the holy table with the other young maidens; the priest stopping before her as the others, but only to say to her, "Pray, and weep." And the persons present, deceived by this demonstration, would believe that she, like her companions, had received the sacrament. This was all Vaninka could obtain.

This confession took place at seven in the evening; and the solitude of the church, joined to the darkness of the night, had even heightened its frightful character. The priest came home pale and trembling, and his wife, Elizabeth, waited for him alone; she had put her little daughter Arina, eight years old, to bed in the adjoining room.

On seeing her husband, the wife uttered a cry of terror, so changed and haggard was his appearance. He endeavoured to make her believe that there was nothing wrong, but the trembling of his voice only served to increase her fears. She asked the cause of his agitation; but he refused to tell her. Elizabeth had been apprised the evening before of the illness of her mother, and she believed her husband to have heard some bad news; the day was Monday, which is considered an unlucky one by the Russians; and in going out in the morning, she had met a man in mourning: these were too strong presages not to announce a misfortune.

Elizabeth burst into tears, crying, "My mother is dead!"

The priest endeavoured in vain to comfort her by assuring her that his trouble did not proceed from that. The poor woman, preoccupied by this one idea, only answered these protestations by continually crying, "My mother is dead!" At last, to bring her to reason, the priest confessed that his emotion proceeded from the recital of a crime he had just heard in the confessional. But Elizabeth shook her head. It was an artifice, she said, to conceal from her the misfortune he had learnt. The crisis, instead of calming became more violent; her tears ceased, and were succeeded by violent hysterics. The priest made her swear to keep the secret, and the sanctity of the confessional was violated.

The little Arina, awakened by her mother's cries, and anxious to know what was passing between her parents, got up, listened at the door, and heard all.

The communion day arrived, and the church of St. Simeon was crowded. Vaninka was kneeling before the balustrade of the choir; behind her were her father and his aide-de-camp, and behind them their domestics.

Arina was also in the church with her mother. The curious child wished to see Vaninka, whose name she had heard pronounced that terrible night when her father violated the most sacred duty imposed on a priest. While her mother was praying, she quitted her chair and glided among the communicants, nearly as far as the balustrade. Arrived there, she was stopped by the group of the general's domestics. But Arina was not come so far to be stopped so easily: she endeavoured to pass through them, they opposed her, she persisted, and one of them repulsed her so roughly, that the child was thrown down, and struck her head against a bench. She got up, her head bleeding, and crying:

"You are very proud for a slave! is it because you belong to the great lady who burned the Red House?"

These words, pronounced in a loud voice and in the midst of the silence which preceded the sacred ceremony, were heard by every body. They were answered by a shriek; Vaninka had fainted.

The next day the general was at the emperor's feet, and told him, as his sovereign and judge, all this long and terrible history, which Vaninka, borne down by the long struggle she had sustained, had revealed to him during the night that had followed the scene in the church.

The emperor, after this strange confession, remained an instant thoughtful; then, rising from the chair in which he had sat during the unfortunate father's story, he went to a *bureau* and wrote the following sentence:

"The priest, having violated what ought to have been inviolable, that is, the secrets of the confessional, is exiled to Siberia, and deprived of his priest's office. His wife will accompany him; she is guilty in not having respected the character of a minister of the altar. The little girl will not quit her parents.

"Annouschka, the waiting maid, will likewise go to Siberia, for not having made known to her master the conduct of his daughter.

"I preserve all my esteem for the general, and I lament the mortal blow that has struck him.

"As to Vaninka, I do not know any punishment that could be inflicted on her. I only see in her the daughter of a brave soldier, whose life has been devoted to the service of his country. Besides, the extraordinary nature of the discovery of the crime places the culprit beyond the limits of my severity: I leave to herself her own punishment. If I comprehend her character right, if she still possess any feelings of dignity, her heart and her remorse will show her the course she ought to follow."

The emperor put this paper, open, into the general's hands, and ordered him to carry it to the Count de Dahler, governor of St. Petersburg.

The next day, the emperor's orders were executed.

Vaninka entered a convent, where, towards the end of the same year, she died of shame and grief.

The general sought death, and found it, on the field of Austerlitz.*

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* We have taken all the particulars of this tragical story, and the precise words of the judgment pronounced by the Emperor Paul, from the excellent work published some years ago by M. Dupré de Saint Maur, and entitled "*L' Ermite en Russie.*"

URBAN GRANDIER.

On Sunday the 26th November, 1631, there arose a great confusion in the little town of Loudun, particularly in the streets, between the abbey of St. Jouin de Marnies, and the church of St. Pierre, in the market-place. This excitement was occasioned by a personage whose merits and demerits had, for some time past, been the object of keen discussion among the inhabitants; it was easy to discover in the faces of the groups assembled at their doors, the different feelings with which they were about to receive this man, who had publicly announced his return upon that day, to his friends and enemies.

About nine o'clock, a great sensation was manifested throughout the crowd. "There he is! there he is!" were circulated with electrical rapidity, from one end of the assembly to the other. Upon this intelligence, some proceeded to close the their doors and windows, as upon days of public calamity, while others joyfully threw open their doors, and, for some minutes, a deep silence, arising from curiosity, succeeded to the noise and confusion, which had prevailed previous to this announcement.

In the midst of this silence, a man was seen advancing, holding a branch of laurel in his hand, as a sign of triumph. His age seemed somewhat about thirty; his figure was tall and well proportioned, his air noble, and his countenance very handsome, although its expression was a little haughty. He wore the ecclesiastical dress, and although he had come three leagues on foot to this town, his garments were remarkably neat and elegant. In this manner he walked with a slow and solemn step, and with his eyes fixed upon the sky, through the streets leading to the church in the market place of Loudun, singing, with a melodious voice, a hymn of thanksgiving, without noticing any one by look, word, or gesture.

In this manner the object of all this excitement reached the porch of the church of St. Pierre. Kneeling upon the uppermost step, he repeated a prayer in a low voice; then rising, he touched with his laurel branch the gates of the church, which immediately opening as if by enchantment, discovered the choir filled and illuminated, as upon the four great yearly festivals, with all the choristers, singers, and vergers in their places. Crossing the nave, the stranger entered the choir, and having knelt a second time at the foot of the altar, he placed his branch of laurel upon the table, threw round him a robe as white as snow, and, before an audience composed of all those who had followed him, he began the holy service of the mass, concluding with a *Te Deum*.

The person who made this triumphal entry into Loudan, was the priest Urban Grandier, who had, upon the preceding evening, appealed to and been absolved by M. d'Escoubleau de Sourdis, Archbishop of Bourdeaux, from a sentence, by which he had been condemned to live upon bread and water every Wednesday, for three months, and had been prohibited from the exercise of ecclesiastical functions in the diocese of Poitiers for five years, and in the town of Loudun for ever.

We shall now see, why the accusation had been brought, and why, in the first instance, the sentence had been given against him.

Urban Grandier was born at Rivère, a little town on the lower Maine. After studying the sciences with his father Pierre, and his uncle Claude Grandier, who were addicted to astrology and alchemy, he was entered, at the age of twelve, as a member of the Jesuits' college, at Bourdeaux, where his teachers remarked in him, besides great advancement in those things which he had already studied, an extraordinary aptitude in acquiring languages, and great eloquence ; he was accordingly made to study Latin and Greek, and exercised in preaching, inorder to develop his talent for oratory. The heads of the college feeling great regard for a pupil, who was likely to do them so much credit, presented him, as soon as his age would permit to take ecclesiastical orders, with the curacy of St. Pierre, in the market place of Loudun, of which they had the gift. Beside this curacy, he was, after some months, provided with a prebend in the college of Sainte-Croix.

The gift of two benefices, to so young a man, not being an inhabitant of the province, appeared an usurpation of the rights and privileges of the people of the district, produced a great sensation in the little town of Loudun, and exposed the titulary to the envy of the other ecclesiastics. But this feeling was also occasioned by numerous other causes : Urban, as we have already said, was eminently handsome ; the education which he had received from his father, had given him the key to a multitude of things, which remained a mystery to the ignorant. Besides, the liberal studies, which he had pursued at the Jesuits' college, had raised him far above the vulgar prejudices of the people, for which he could not conceal his contempt; and finally his eloquence had drawn to his sermons almost all the congregations of the other religious communities, especially those of the mendicant orders, whose preaching had, up to that time, borne the palm at Loudun. This was more than cause enough to give rise to envy, and, in a short time, to convert jealousy into hatred.

The idle slander of small towns and the irritable contempt of the vulgar for all that is beyond them, are well known. Urban, with his superior qualities was born for a wider sphere, but, confined as he was to the limits of a little country town, all that would have promoted his advancement at Paris did but hasten his ruin at Loudun.

Unfortunately for Urban, his character, far from being such as to excuse his genius in the eyes of his enemies, only augmented the hate which he had inspired. Mild and agreeable among his friends, he was cold, haughty, and sarcastic towards his enemies ; immovable in the resolutions which he had taken, jealous of the rank to which he had attained, and which he defended as a conquest ; untractable as to his interests when he had right upon his side, he repulsed attacks and injuries with a rigour, which changed temporary adversaries into perpetual enemies.

The first example which Urban gave of this inflexibility was in 1620, when he commenced and gained a suit against a priest named Meunier. Although at that time scarcely established in his position, he enforced the sentence with so much severity, that he aroused a resentment which burst out upon every opportunity.

A second action which he had to sustain against the chapter of Sainte-Croix, concerning a house, the possession of which this chapter disputed with him, and which, as in the former case, he gained, gave him another opportunity of displaying his rigid enforcement of his rights. The agent of this chapter, who will have an important place in this history, was a canon in the college of Sainte-Croix, and director of the Ursuline convent: he was a man of violent passions, and of a vindictive and ambitious disposition. His qualities, too commonplace for him ever to attain a high rank, were yet too superior, even in their mediocrity, to all who surrounded him, to allow him to remain contented with the secondary position in which he was placed. As hypocritical as Urban was frank and open, he had managed to obtain, wherever his name was known, the reputation of a man of great piety; to effect which, he had feigned to be as ascetic as an anchorite, and as rigid as a saint. Well versed, nevertheless, in ecclesiastical matters, he had regarded as a personal humiliation the loss of an action in which he was concerned: an action, too, on the success of which he had confidently relied; it will not be wondered, therefore, that when Urban triumphed, and made use of his advantages with the same severity as in the former case of Meunier the priest, he might reckon upon Mignon, from that day, as a second enemy, not only more bitter, but also more dangerous than the first.

In the mean time, it happened that a person named Barot, Mignon's uncle, had a dispute with Urban. As he was a man of no great talent, in order to crush him, Urban deemed he had but to let fall some of his cold and contemptuous retorts, which branded with disgrace those to whom they were addressed; but this man was very wealthy, had no children, and the town of Loudun was filled with his numerous relatives and connexions, all unceasingly endeavouring to curry favour with him, in order to be mentioned in his will; so that these, taking part in his quarrel, swelled the number of Urban's adversaries.

About the same time a more serious occurrence took place: among the most assiduous of his penitents, Urban had remarked a young and handsome girl, the daughter of Trinquant, the *procureur du roi*, who was another of Mignon, the canon's, uncles. It happened that this girl fell into a languid state of health, which eventually confined her to her room. She was nursed during this illness by one of her friends, a girl of the name of Marthe Pelletier, who, suddenly renouncing all her companions and pleasures, carried her devotion so far as to shut herself up with her sick friend; but, when Julie Trinquant had recovered and reappeared in the world, it became known, that during her seclusion, Marthe Pelletier had been delivered of a child, which she had had baptised and put out to nurse. By one of those strange conclusions, to which men frequently come, the public insisted that the real mother was not she who declared herself to be so, but that Marthe Pelletier had sold her reputation, for money, to her friend. As to the father, there was still less doubt upon that point; public rumour, actively circulated, laid the charge to Urban Grandier.

Upon the circulation of these reports, tending to throw dishonour upon his daughter's fame, Trinquant took upon himself, as *procureur du roi*, to have Marthe Pelletier arrested and thrown into prison. She was there interrogated as to the birth of the child, which she continued to assert was her own, requesting permission to bring it up, and alleging, that although she was culpable she was not criminal. Trinquant was compelled to release her, without having gained any thing by this abuse of justice, but making the affair still more scandalous, and strengthening the conviction to which the public had come.

Thus, whether he owed it to good fortune or to his own superiority, all who had attacked Urban Grandier had been foiled; but each of his victories increased the number of his enemies, which, in a short time, was so great, that any other man than Urban would have been terrified, and would have taken measures to pacify them, or, at any rate, to have prepared to defend himself against their attacks. But Urban, in his pride, or, perhaps, in his innocence, despised the advice of his sincerest friends, and continued to walk in the same path, which he had followed from the beginning.

Up to this time, the attacks made against Urban had been individual and separate; and his enemies, attributing their want of success to this cause, resolved to unite together in order to crush him. Accordingly a meeting was held at Barot's house, which consisted of Meunier, Trinquant, and Mignon; this last-mentioned person brought with him a man named Menuau, *avocat du roi*, his intimate friend, but whose assistance was gained to their side by another motive than that of friendship: Menuau was in love with a woman who steadfastly rejected his suit, and he took it into his head that the indifference and contempt with which she treated him was occasioned by a passion with which Urban had inspired her. The object of this union was to drive the common enemy out of Loudun.

Urban, however, maintained so strict a guard upon his conduct, that no real charge could be brought against him, excepting the pleasure which he appeared to take in the society of women, who, upon their part seeing a young, handsome, and eloquent preacher, gave him the preference as their director. As this preference had given offence to numerous fathers and husbands of the town, it was resolved, that upon this point, the only one upon which he seemed to be vulnerable, their attack upon Grandier should be commenced. Accordingly, dating from the day upon which this plan of offence had been agreed upon, the vague rumours which for some time past had been spread about, began to assume some consistency; it was said, that a certain young lady of their town, notwithstanding his frequent infidelities to her, continued to be his favourite mistress. This young lady, having, it was said, some scruples of conscience, regarding their *liaison*, Grandier was accused of having appeased them by committing sacrilege; this sacrilege was a marriage, which he was said to have contracted with her, during the night, and at which he acted at once the parts of the husband and the priest. The greater the absurdity of these reports, the more eagerly did they obtain credence, and, in a short time, no one in Loudun doubted the truth of the charge, although it was certainly an astonishing circumstance, that in so small a town, it was found impossible to give the name of the strange bride, who had been rash enough to contract marriage with a priest already wedded to the church.

Great as was Grandier's strength of mind, he could not conceal from himself, upon what slippery ground he was standing. He felt that calumny was busy around him. But according to his principles, to take one backward step, would be an acknowledgment of his guilt; besides which, it was probably already too late to recede. He accordingly made no change in his conduct, but remained haughty, sarcastic, and inflexible as ever.

Among those who received these rumours, injurious to Urban's reputation, with the greatest eagerness, was an important personage of the name of Duthibaut, the ruling spirit of the town, and the oracle of the vulgar. His designs, however, reached Urban's ear; he learnt at the Marquis de Bellay's, this man had spoken of him disrespectfully; and one day, as he was about to enter the church of Sainte-Croix, dressed in his sacerdotal robes, happening to meet him in the church porch, he reproached him for his calumnies with his accustomed haughtiness and contempt. Duthibaut, however, accustomed, from his wealth and influence, to say or do whatever he pleased with impunity, was unable to bear this public reprimand, and lifting his cane, he struck Urban with it on the back.

The opportunity thus afforded to Grandier, of revenging himself upon his enemies was too tempting to be lost; but, considering rightly, that he would obtain no justice by addressing his complaint to the local authorities, although the respect due to religious worship had been compromised by this affair, he resolved to throw himself at the feet of Louis XIII., who heard his accusation with attention, and wishing to punish the outrage offered to a minister of religion, in his sacerdotal garments, he sent the affair to parliament to have the accusation against Duthibaut decided there.

Urban's enemies had now no time to lose. Profiting by his absence, they laid a complaint against him. Two wretches, named Cherbonneau and Bugrean, consenting to be the informers before the officials at Poitiers, they accused Grandier of having debauched women and girls, of being impious and profane, of never reading his breviary, and of having converted the sanctuary into a place of debauchery and prostitution. The official received the complaint, appointed the lieutenant civil, Louis Chauvet, assisted by the deacon of Saint-Marcel, and the Loudenois, to inquire into it; so that, at the same time that Urban was prosecuting his charge against Duthibaut at Paris, a complaint was made against himself at Loudun.

This inquiry was made with all the activity of religious revenge. Trinquant appeared as a witness, and was followed by several others; but the depositions, which were not given according to the wishes of the accusers, were either altered or dispensed with. The result was, that the complaint, which consisted of the grave charges before mentioned, was sent to the bishop of Poitiers, Grandier's accusers having powerful friends high in favour with that prelate. Besides which, the bishop had a personal quarrel with Urban, who, it appears, had, in an urgent case, granted a dispensation of the publication of a marriage; so that the bishop, already prejudiced against him, saw sufficient grounds for the accusation, superficial as it was, to warrant him in issuing a warrant for Grandier's arrest.

Grandier was, as we have before said, at Paris, urging his complaint before the parliament, when this warrant was issued against him. Duthibaut, having received it before Grandier had even heard of its existence, after defending himself by giving a description of the curate's scandalous conduct, produced the paper of which he was the bearer, as a proof of his assertions. The court, not knowing what to think, of what was taking place before them, ordained, that before deciding upon Grandier's complaint, he should appear before his bishop, and clear himself from the accusations which had been brought against him. Grandier instantly left

Paris, arrived in Loudun, and immediately proceeded to inquire into the affair. He then set out for Poitiers to prepare for his defence; but scarcely had he arrived, when he was arrested by an officer, and taken to the prison of the bishopric.

This was on the 15th of November; his prison was cold and damp; nevertheless, Grandier could not obtain leave to be transferred into another. From this moment, he saw that his enemies were more powerful than he had believed, and he resolved to be patient. He remained in confinement for two months, during which time even his best friends believed him to be lost; so much so that Duthibaut laughed openly at the complaint which had been made against him, and from which he thought himself already rid; and Barot had already applied in favour of one of his heirs, named Ismaël Boulieau, for the benefices, left vacant by Urban Grandier.

The costs of the action were raised by subscription, the wealthy paying for the poor; for as the trial was to take place in Poitiers, and the whole of the witnesses resided at Loudun, the removal of so many persons from the one place to the other necessarily occasioned a considerable expenditure; but avarice was laid aside in the thirst for revenge; each one was taxed according to his means, and at the end of six months the preparations were completed.

Notwithstanding, however, the care which had been taken to make this action as fatal as possible to the object of their hatred, the principal accusation could not be proved. Urban was accused of having debauched women and girls; but no names were given, no complaining parties were produced: all the statements were those of public rumour, none were proved by facts; it was altogether one of the strangest actions, which was ever tried. Nevertheless, sentence was given upon the 3d of January, 1630, condemning Grandier to fast upon bread and water every Wednesday for three months, and prohibited *a divinis* in the diocese of Poitiers for five years, and in the town of Loudun for ever.

Both sides appealed from this sentence. Grandier appealed from it to the Archbishop of Bourdeaux, and his adversaries appealed from it to the parliament of Paris. This last was made with the object of oppressing and crushing Grandier, but Grandier had in himself a strength, proportioned to the attack: without allowing himself to be discouraged, he had the appeal against him pleaded before the parliament, while he remained upon the spot, personally to pursue his appeal before the Archbishop of Bourdeaux. But as it was necessary to hear the evidence of numerous witnesses which, from the great distance between the two places, was nearly impossible, the court resigned the settlement of the question to the presidial court of Poitiers. The Lieutenant Criminal recommenced the proceedings; but, as they were upon this occasion conducted with impartiality, the result was unfavourable to the accusing party. Contradictions were discovered in the evidence of the witnesses; some confessed that they had been bought, and others declared that their evidence had been forged. Among the number of the latter, was a priest named Méchin and the same Ismaël Boulieau, for whom Trinquant had exerted himself so eagerly to procure Urban Grandier's benefices. Boulieau's declaration is lost; but that of Méchin has been preserved. It is dated the last day of October, 1630. Méchin solemnly declares, for the discharge of his conscience, that the contents of the deposition which he had been solicited to make against Grandier were totally false; that he had never seen Grandier commit any of the acts mentioned in that deposition, or any blameable act whatever; and that any thing which the deposition might contain to the contrary, was against his conscience. He added that it had not been read to him when he signed it.

It was impossible, with such conclusive proofs of innocence, that the accusation could be sustained. Accordingly, upon the 25th of May, 1631, by a sentence of the presidial court, Grandier was acquitted of the charge made against him. He had still, nevertheless, to appear before the tribunal of the Archbishop of Bourdeaux, who was investigating his appeal, in order to obtain his justification. Grandier, profiting by the arrival of this prelate at his abbey of St. Jouin les Marnies, which was within three leagues of Loudun, pressed his suit before him. His enemies, discouraged by the loss of the action before the presidial court of Poitiers, defended themselves feebly, and the archbishop, after another investigation, which rendered the innocence of the accused still more apparent, pronounced a final sentence of acquittal. Grandier's spirited defence in these affairs, under the eyes of his bishop, produced two important results. He proved himself innocent of the calumnious charges which had been circulated respecting him, and in the course of the investigations, his great talents, and the elevated qualities of his mind were brought out. Accordingly, the archbishop, having taken great interest in Urban, and seeing the persecutions to which he was exposed, advised him to exchange his livings, and to quit a town in which the principal inhabitants appeared to have sworn so deadly a hatred to him. But Urban's character did not allow even of a capitulation with his rights; he declared to his superior, that strong in his protection and in the purity of his intentions, he would remain where God had placed him. To this the archbishop had no more to say, but knowing that if Urban did one day fall, his ruin, like Satan's, would be occasioned by his pride, he inserted in the sentence a passage, in which he recommended him "*to comport himself well and modestly in his duties according to the holy decrees and the canonical regulations.*" We have seen how well Urban, by his triumphal entry into Loudun, obeyed his superior's recommendations.

Urban Grandier was not contented with this triumphant demonstration, which was blamed even by his friends, but instead of allowing the hatred of his enemies to die away, or at any rate to slumber, by avoiding any recrimination upon the past, he took up his complaint against Duthibaut with renewed activity, and exerted himself so effectually, that he obtained a decree from the Tournelle, whereby Duthibaut was sentenced to undergo, bareheaded, a reprimand, to pay a fine, to make reparation to the complainant, and to bear all the expenses of the action. This adversary vanquished, Urban immediately turned upon the others, more indefatigable in his pursuit of justice than his enemies had been in their thirst for revenge. The Archbishop of Bourdeaux, in his sentence, had given him recourse against his accusers for his damages and for the restitution of the profits of his livings; he, therefore, gave public notice that he would carry the reparation as far as the accusers had carried the offence, and immediately began to collect all the proofs requisite for the success of this new action. Vainly did his friends endeavour to persuade him that the reparation which he had already obtained was great and sufficient; vainly did they represent to him the danger which he incurred by driving the vanquished to despair; Urban replied, that he was ready to endure all the persecutions which his enemies might raise against him, but having right upon his side, it was in vain to endeavour to inspire him with terror.

When Grandier's adversaries were informed of the storm which was lowering above their heads, they at once understood that the question between them and this man was now one of life or death. They had another meeting in the village of Pindardine, in a house belonging to Trinquant, which was attended by Mignon, Barot, Meunier, Duthibaut, Trinquant, and Menuau, to consider how the dangers which threatened them should be averted. Mignon had already formed the plan of a new intrigue which he developed, and which was joyfully and unanimously adopted. We shall now see how this scheme was executed.

The canon, Mignon, was, as we have said, the director of the convent of Ursulines at Loudun. Although this community was composed almost entirely of young ladies of rank or good family, yet as these nuns had almost all adopted a monastic life from want of fortune, the community, rich as it was in noble names, was so poor in money, that upon its first establishment they were compelled to take lodgings in a house belonging to a man named Moussaut du Frene, whose brother was a priest; this brother naturally became a director of these nuns, but within a year after its establishment, he died, leaving his office vacant.

The house inhabited by the Ursulines had been sold to them at a price considerably beneath its real value, from a report which was generally believed in the town that it was haunted. During the year in which they resided in the house, the ghosts seemed to have entirely disappeared, a fact which had contributed not a little in establishing their reputation for sanctity in the town; it was at the end of this year, as we have said, that their director died.

To the younger members of the nunnery, this death afforded a much wished for opportunity for amusing themselves at the expense of the old nuns, who, from the stricter adherence to the rules than the rest, were disliked by them. They resolved to evoke the spirits, who, it was believed, still lurked in the gloom of night about their dwelling. Accordingly, in a short time, dismal voices, resembling sighs and moans, were heard proceeding from the roof of the house. The phantoms soon ventured to penetrate into the garrets and attics, where they announced their presence by a great rattling of chains, and they became at last so familiar that they would frequently enter the sleeping-rooms, tumbling things about, and carrying off the clothes of the inmates.

These proceedings occasioned so much terror in the convent, and excited such a sensation in the town, that the abbess summoned the most sagacious of the sisters to a consultation, and asked their advice as to what steps should be taken in the delicate circumstances in which she was placed. The unanimous opinion was, that the deceased director should be replaced if possible by a still more holy man; and whether from his reputation for piety, or from some other motive, it was resolved that Urban Grandier should be applied to, which was accordingly done; he, however, declined their offer, alleging, that having already to fulfil the duties of two livings, his time was too fully taken up for him to be able to keep an efficacious watch upon the flock, who had proposed to him to become their shepherd, and advised the abbess to apply to some one more worthy and less occupied than himself.

This answer, it will be readily understood, wounded the pride of the community, who next turned their attention to Mignon, canon of the collegiate church of Sainte-Croix. He, though offended that the offer had not been made to him, till after its refusal by Urban Grandier, accepted it nevertheless, retaining, however, the most deadly hatred towards the man who had been preferred to him.

The new director now learnt from the abbess, with what enemies he had to deal. Instead of reassuring her by denying the existence of the phantoms who tormented the community, Mignon, who instantly saw, that in their disappearance, which he trusted to bring about, he would have a good opportunity of confirming the character for sanctity to which he aspired, replied that the holy Scriptures allowed the existence of spirits, instancing what he said by referring to the case of the witch of Endor, by whose power the ghost of Samuel had appeared to Saul; but adding, that the ritual pointed out the sure means for their expulsion, provided that those who used those means were pure in thought and action; and that he trusted fervently, with the help of God, he would rid the community of these nocturnal visitants.

As a first step towards the desired end, he ordered a fast of three days to be followed by a general confession of all the nuns. It will be understood that from the questions which he put to the nuns on this occasion, Mignon had no difficulty in discovering the secret. Those who represented the phantoms accused themselves, and implicated as their accomplice, a young novice, named Marie Aubin, who confessed the whole truth. It appeared that it was she who rose at night and opened the door of the dormitory belonging to the more elderly nuns, which the most timid among them were very particular in locking every evening on the inside; this precaution, to their great terror, having no effect in preventing the entry of the spirits. Mignon, under pretence of not wishing to expose the delinquents to the anger of the abbess, who might suspect something, if the apparitions disappeared from the day of the confession, authorized them, from time to time, to renew their nocturnal racket, commanding them gradually to leave it off. Returning to the abbess, he informed her, that he had found the breasts of all the members of the community so chaste and pure, that he trusted that, with the assistance of his prayers, the convent would in a short time be freed from the apparitions which possessed it.

Things, of course, happened as the director had predicted, and the reputation of the holy man, who had watched and prayed for the deliverance of the good Ursulines, was wonderfully increased in the town of Loudun.

All continued perfectly tranquil in the convent up to the time, when Mignon, Duthibaut, Menuau, Meunier, and Barot, after the loss of their cause before the Archbishop of Bourdeaux, dreading the punishment as liars and slanderers, with which Grandier threatened them, united themselves to resist this inflexible man, who, it was perfectly clear, would ruin them if they did not ruin him.

The result of this combination was a strange rumour, which after some time was widely circulated: it was said in Loudun, that the spirits, after being driven away by the holy director, had returned to the attack in invisible and impalpable forms, and that several nuns had given evident proofs by their words as well as their actions that they were possessed by them.

These reports were communicated to Mignon, who, instead of contradicting them, raised his eyes to heaven, saying that God was certainly very great and very merciful; but that Satan was also very cunning, more especially when he was assisted by that black human art which was termed magic; that nevertheless, although these rumours were not entirely devoid of foundation, yet no certainty could be attached to the real place of possession, and that time alone could unfold the truth upon this point.

The effect which replies of this nature produced upon minds, already disposed to believe the wildest rumours, may be guessed. Mignon allowed them to circulate in this manner for several months, without suggesting any new remedy. At the end of this time he sent for the curate of Saint-Jacques de Chinon, informing him that things had come to such a pass in the Ursuline convent, that he could no longer take upon himself the sole responsibility of these unfortunate women, and requested him to come and visit them with him. This curate, whose name was Pierre Barré, was exactly the man to conduct such an affair as that for which Mignon required him: fanatical, melancholy, and visionary, he was ready to undertake every thing that could increase his character for austerity and piety. Desiring to give to this visit all the solemnity which so solemn an occasion required, he arrived in Loudun at the head of his parishioners, having come in procession on foot, to give greater effect to the scene.

Mignon and Barré went into the convent, where they remained six hours closeted with the nuns. At the end of that time, Barré came out alone, announcing to his parishioners that they might return to Chinon; but that, as for him, he would remain in Loudun to assist the venerable director of the Ursulines in the holy task which he had undertaken.

This request, unaccompanied by any explanation, redoubled the general curiosity; it was said that it was not only one or two of the nuns, but the whole convent who were possessed: the magician who was the cause of the charm, being the Urban Grandier, whose pride was said to have delivered him into the power of Satan, with whom he had made a compact, by which it was agreed, that, at the price of his salvation, he should become the wisest man on earth; and, indeed, Urban's knowledge was so far superior to that of any of the inhabitants of Loudun, that few had any difficulty in believing this part of the story. Some indeed had the good sense to shrug their shoulders at all these absurdities, and to laugh at Mignon and Barré's mummeries, of which, as yet, they saw only the ridiculous side.

Mignon and Barré continued their visits to the nunnery, for ten or eleven successive days, staying upon each of these occasions, sometimes four, sometimes six hours, and once or twice remaining the whole of the day. They at length wrote to Messire Guillaume Cerisay de la Gueriniѐre, seneschal of the district, and to Messire Louis Chauvet, lieutenant civil, requesting them to visit the Ursuline convent to see two nuns who were possessed by evil spirits, and witness the strange and almost incredible effects of their possession.

The two magistrates could not help acceding to this request; and, indeed, partaking, as they did, the general curiosity, they did not grudge the trouble of a personal visit to the convent, to convince themselves of the truth or falsehood of the rumours, which, for some time past, had been agitating the town. They accordingly repaired to the convent to be present at the exorcisms, and to decide whether the possession was real or pretended. When they reached the gate they were met by Mignon, in full canonicals, who informed them that the nuns, for the last fortnight, had been beset by spectres, and by fearful dreams, and that the lady abbess, and two other nuns, had been for eight or ten days visibly possessed by evil spirits, but that, finally, the demons had been expelled from their bodies, by the ministry of himself, Barré, and several other holy Carmelites, who had joined them, against the common enemy. He added, however, that upon the night of Sunday, the preceding day, and the 10th of the month, the abbess, Jeanne de Belfield, and a lay sister of the name of Jeanne Dumagnoux, had been again tormented and possessed by the same spirits. He had discovered, from the exorcisms which he had commenced, that this second attack had been made, by the agency of a new compact, of which the mark and symbol was a bunch of roses, as, in the first instance, it had been three thorns. He said, further, that the evil spirits had, during the first possession, shown great reluctance to give their names, but that, compelled by the power of his exorcisms, the one who had entered into the body of the abbess, had been forced to confess that his name was Astaroth, one of God's greatest enemies; while the other, who tormented the lay sister, was a devil of an inferior order, named Sabulon. Unfortunately, said Mignon, the two possessed nuns were then asleep: he accordingly requested the seneschal and the civil lieutenant to repeat their visit at some other time. The two magistrates were taking their leave, when a nun hastily announced to them, that the two possessed sisters were again tormented by their persecutors; they went up, with Mignon and the curate of Venier, into a room at the top of the house, furnished with seven small beds, only two of which were occupied, the one by the abbess and the other by the lay sister. The abbess, her possession being considered of the greatest importance, was surrounded by several Carmelites, by nuns, belonging to the convent, by Mathurin Rousseau, priest and canon of Sainte-Croix, and by Mannouri, the surgeon of the town.

The two magistrates had no sooner entered the room, than the abbess was seized with violent convulsions, making the strangest contortions, and uttering cries, in exact imitation of those of a sucking pig. The magistrates looked on with the greatest astonishment, which was increased almost to stupefaction, at seeing her plunge in and out of the bed, and this with such diabolical grimaces and gestures, that if they did not believe in the truth of her possession, they could not help admiring the manner in which she played her part. Mignon told the seneschal and the lieutenant civil, that although the abbess had no knowledge of Latin, yet, if they desired it, she would answer any questions they chose to put to her in that language. The magistrates replied, that the object with which they were come, was to decide upon the truth of the possession; and they accordingly requested him to exorcise the spirits, and to afford all possible proofs of their presence. Mignon then approached the abbess, and commanded the deepest silence, and, after repeating all the exorcisms ordained in the ritual, he proceeded to the interrogation.

The following is literally what took place, with a literal translation:—

Q. "*Propter quam causam ingressus es in corpus hujus virginis?*"	"Why have you entered the body of this young maiden?"

A. "*Causâ animositatis.*"	"On account of enmity."
Q. "*Per quod pactum?*"	"By what compact?"
A. "*Per flores.*"	"Flowers."
Q. "*Quales?*"	"What flowers?"
A. "*Rosas.*"	"Roses."
Q. "*Quis misit?*"	"Who sent you?"

At this question the two magistrates observed the movement of hesitation in the abbess; twice she opened her mouth to answer, without uttering a sound, the third time she replied, in a faint voice,—

A. "*Urbanus.*"	"Urban."
Q. "*Dic cognomen?*"	"What is his surname?"

Here, again, the possessed woman appeared in a state of hesitation, but, as if compelled by the power of the exorcist, she answered,—

A. "*Grandier.*"	"Grandier."
Q. "*Dic qualitatem?*"	"What is his profession?"
A. "*Sacerdos.*"	"A priest."
Q. "*Cujus ecclesiæ?*	"Of what church?"
A. "*Sancti Petri.*"	"Of Saint Peter."
Q. "*Quæ persona attulit flores?*"	"What person has brought the flowers?"
A. "*Diabolica.*"	"A person sent by the devil."

Immediately after replying to this last question, the possessed woman was restored to her senses, prayed to God, and endeavoured to eat a bit of bread which was offered to her, but which was immediately rejected, as she observed that she could not swallow, owing to her excessive thirst. After taking some drink, which was brought to her, she sat up and ate, although in small quantity, as her convulsions occasionally returned.

The two magistrates, seeing that this scene was over, withdrew into the embrasure of a window, and began conversing in a low voice. Mignon, fearing that they were not yet sufficiently convinced, went to them, and said, that in what they had just seen, there was something resembling the story of Gaufredi, who had been executed some years before, by a decree issued by the parliament of Aix, in Provence. This observation of Mignon's, disclosed so visibly and clumsily the object at which he was aiming, that neither the seneschal nor the lieutenant civil made any reply, excepting, that the latter remarked to the exorcist, that he was astonished that he had not pressed the abbess to explain *the cause of the hatred* of which she had spoken in her answers, and which was of such importance to inquire into. Mignon explained this by saying, that he was not permitted to ask questions out of mere curiosity. The lieutenant civil was insisting upon this point, when the lay sister relieved Mignon from his embarrassment, by falling, in her turn, into convulsions. The two magistrates immediately placed themselves by her bedside, and requested Mignon to make the same inquiries to her as in the former case; but question as he would, the only answer which the exorcist could extract from her was,—"*Ask the other—ask the other!*" Mignon explained this refusal, by saying, that the devil who possessed the lay sister, was of an inferior order, and referred the exorcist to Astaroth, his superior. Good or bad, as this was all the answer which Mignon could or would give, the magistrates retired, and prepared a report, in which they abstained from all comments or reflections upon what they had seen and heard, and having signed it, they took their departure.

But the circumspection of the two magistrates was not imitated in the town, which was thrown, by these proceedings, into the greatest excitement. The superstitious believed, the hypocritical pretended to believe, and the worldly, whose number was great, made no efforts to conceal their disbelief of the whole affair. They were astonished, and it must be confessed, not without reason, that the power of the exorcists had only been able to expel the devils for two days, who, it would seem, had yielded up their victims with the sole object of putting the priests to confusion by their reappearance. They asked why the demon who possessed the abbess spoke Latin, while the one tormenting the lay sister appeared ignorant of that language; the inferior rank to which he belonged in the diabolical hierarchy, not appearing to be a sufficient explanation of this circumstance. The refusal too, of Mignon, to pursue the interrogation respecting the cause of hatred, led to a suspicion that Astaroth, learned as he appeared to be, had reached the end of his Latin, and was unable to continue the dialogue. Besides these causes for doubt, it was well known, that a few days before, a meeting of Urban's greatest enemies had taken place, in the village of Pindardine, and Mignon's mistake, in talking so soon of Gaufredi the priest's execution at Aix, was severely commented upon. Finally, it was desired that some other order of monks than that of the Carmelites, who had great cause of complaint against Grandier, had been witnesses of the exorcisms. From all these circumstances, it was agreed, among the sensible and right thinking inhabitants of the town, that the affair was, to say the least of it, very suspicious.

Next day, the 12th of October, the seneschal and the lieutenant civil, having learnt, that the exorcisms were taking place without their having been apprized, or their presence requested, again repaired to the convent, accompanied by the canon Rousseau. They immediately summoned Mignon, and warned him, that this affair was now of such importance, that no steps should be allowed to be taken, without the presence of the authorities; and that it was imperatively necessary, that they should be immediately sent for upon every occasion. They added, that if known to have any dislike or hatred towards Grandier, Mignon, as director of the nuns, might draw upon himself suspicions of having made suggestions injurious to his character,—suspicions which he, most of all, should desire as soon as possible, to see dissipated; that accordingly, exorcists legally appointed, should continue from that time, the work which he had so piously commenced. Mignon replied, that he should never oppose their being present at the exorcisms; but that he could not promise that the devils would answer any other person than himself, or Barré. At this moment Barré himself came up, even more pale and gloomy than usual, and announced to the magistrates, with great appearance of truth, that immediately before their arrival, the most extraordinary circumstances had taken place. They inquired the nature of these circumstances, and Barré replied, that he had learnt from the abbess, that she was possessed not by one, but by seven devils, of which Astaroth was the chief; that Grandier had given the compact, entered into between him and the devil, under the symbol of a bunch of roses, to a person of the name of Jean Pivart, who had put it into the hands of a girl by whom it had been thrown over the walls of the convent garden; that this deed was done upon the night between Saturday and Sunday, *horâ secundâ nocturnâ*, that is to say, two hours after midnight. These were the exact terms which she used; she constantly refused to give the name of the girl, although she named Jean Pivart without any reluctance, and when questioned as to the latter's profession, she replied, "*Pauper magus*" (a poor sorcerer); and being pressed upon the word *magus*, she added, "*Magicianus et civis*" (a sorcerer and a citizen). It was at this moment that the two magistrates had arrived, and she was still in the same condition.

The lieutenant civil and the seneschal listened to this narrative with all the gravity which became men engaged in the fulfilment of important judicial duties. When it was finished, they intimated to Mignon and Barré, that they would again wish to go up to the room occupied by the possessed nuns, to judge by their own eyes and ears of the miraculous circumstances which they were informed were taking place. The two exorcists made no opposition, but said that by this time the devils were probably fatigued with the exorcisms, and might perhaps refuse to answer their questions. Accordingly, the two patients became calm immediately upon the entrance of the two magistrates. Mignon took advantage of this moment, to say mass; but, although it was expected that the devils would give some signs of opposition, they remained on the contrary perfectly tranquil; excepting that the lay sister was seized with a violent trembling in the hands and feet. This was the only occurrence which took place upon that morning, which was thought worthy of being noticed in the report; nevertheless, Mignon and Barré undertook to promise, that if the two magistrates would repeat their visit in about three hours, the devils, having regained their strength in the interval, would most probably be prepared to give another performance.

Determined to see the affair to an end, they returned to the convent at the appointed time, accompanied by Monsieur Irenée de Saint-Marthe, Sieur Deshumeaux, and found the apartment filled with curious spectators. The exorcists had not been mistaken, the devils were once more in full vigour.

The abbess, as usual, underwent the greatest torments. This, however, was not surprising, since, from her own confession, no fewer than seven devils were in her body. She lay, apparently in terrible convulsions, writhing and foaming at the mouth, as if in a state of frenzy. Such a state could not last, without really endangering her health. Barré inquired of the devil, when he would leave her. "*Cras mané*" (to-morrow morning), he answered. The exorcist wished to know, why he did not come out immediately; the abbess replied by murmuring first the word, *Pactum*, a compact; then *sacerdos*, priest, and, finally, either *finis* or *finit;* for even to those who were nearest to her, she was almost inaudible. These explanations not being deemed very satisfactory, the two magistrates directed the interrogation to be proceeded with; but the devils had done, and notwithstanding the most powerful exorcisms, they kept an obstinate silence. When these ceremonies were concluded, Barré commanded the abbess to declare that her heart and soul belonged to God, which she did without any difficulty; but not so, when he ordered her to say that her body was also His; for the devil, who possessed her, indicated by renewed convulsions, that he would not allow himself to be driven from his tenement without resistance. However, notwithstanding the devil's obstinacy, the abbess at length surrendered her body, as she had done her heart and soul, to God; and, victorious in this last contest, her face immediately resumed its usual expression, and she remarked to Barré, with a smile, that *Satan had departed from her.*

The lieutenant civil then inquired of her, if she remembered all or any of the questions, which had been put to her, or the answers which she had returned to them, but she replied that she had no remembrance of any thing. After taking some refreshment, she told the spectators, that she clearly recollected the period, and the manner in which the first attack had been made. She was in bed at the time, which was about ten o'clock at night, and several nuns were in her room, when she suddenly felt her hand seized, something put into it, and her fingers closed upon it; at the same instant she felt something like three pricks of a pin, and upon her uttering a loud scream, the nuns ran up to her; she held out her hand to them, and they discovered three thorns in it, each of which had made a slight wound in her skin. As if to avert all commentary from these extraordinary revelations, the lay sister was at that moment attacked with convulsions; Barré had begun his prayers and exorcisms, when a great confusion arose in the assembly; one of those present had distinctly seen a black cat descend into the room by the chimney and disappear. No one doubted that this must be the devil, and a general pursuit was commenced. Terrified by the sight of, and the noise proceeding from, so many people, the poor animal took refuge upon a canopy; from which it was carried in triumph and placed upon the abbess's bed. Barré immediately began to exorcise it, adjuring it to declare itself, but the mummery was interrupted by the portress of the convent, who recognised and reclaimed the pretended devil as her favourite cat, and carried it away with her to keep it from harm.

The assembly was now upon the point of breaking up, and Barré, immediately seeing that this last occurrence might tend to make the whole affair ridiculous, resolved to inspire the persons present with a salutary terror. He accordingly announced, that he now proceed to burn the flowers, which were said to have been the symbol of the second compact. He took a bunch of faded white roses, and after ordering a chafing dish to be brought to him, he threw them into the fire. To the great surprise of all the spectators, the roses were consumed without any of the anticipated effects; the sky remained clear, no thunder was heard, nor was any bad smell felt in the room. Observing the general disappointment, Barré promised that great events should take place upon the following day: he engaged that the devil should speak much more clearly than he had as yet done; that he should come out of the abbess, giving such evident signs of his exit, that no one would then dare to doubt the truth of the possession. Upon this, the lieutenant criminel, René Hervé, who was present, said to Barré, that advantage must then be taken to question the demon, respecting Pivart, who was unknown at Loudun, where every one else knew each other. Barré replied in Latin, "*Et hoc dicet et puellam nominabit,*" that is to say, "Not only will he explain that, but he will also name the girl." This girl, who was to be named by the devil, as our readers will remember, was she who was accused of having thrown the compact over the garden-wall, and whom the devil had up to that time, obstinately refused to implicate. These promises being made, every one retired in eager expectation of what next day was to bring forth.

Upon that same evening Grandier called at the seneschal's house. He had, up to that time, laughed at these exorcisms; for the play appeared to him to be so badly got up, and the accusation such a palpable absurdity, that he was not the least uneasy about the result. But, understanding how important the affair had become, and seeing the implacable hatred of his enemies, the example of Gaufredi, which had been before cited by Mignon, occurred also to his mind, and he resolved to appear and confront his adversaries. He was, accordingly, come to make his complaint before the seneschal, which was to this effect. It commenced with charging Mignon with having exorcised two nuns in the presence of the lieutenant civil, the seneschal, and a great number of spectators, and with having, during these exorcisms, and before these persons, by means of pretended demons, named him as the cause of their possession; that the whole affair was an imposture and a calumny, devised against his character; he accordingly prayed the seneschal to have these two nuns confined and interrogated separately. Should there be, in the opinion of the magistrate, any appearance of possession, he prayed him to appoint disinterested ecclesiastics of rank and integrity, to exorcise these nuns, if necessary, in place of Mignon and his party, who were interested in his conviction. He further requested, that the seneschal should draw up a report of what took place at these exorcisms, so that justice might be done towards him. The magistrate agreed to all Grandier's requests, and informed him, that Barré had been the exorcist upon that day, charged with the duty, as he said, by the Bishop of Poitiers himself. The seneschal was, as we have seen, a sensible man, bearing no enmity to Grandier. His advice to him was to apply to his bishop, who was, however, unfortunately the Bishop of Poitiers, a man already prejudiced against him. Grandier did not conceal from him, that the prelate's opinion would not be likely to be favourable to him; he, finally, resolved to defer taking any steps, until he saw the occurrence of the following day.

This day, looked forward to by so many persons with such impatience, arrived at last. The seneschal, the civil and criminal lieutenants, the *procureur du roi*, and the lieutenant of the provostry, followed by their officers, were at the convent by eight o'clock in the morning: they found the outer gate open, but the inner closed. After waiting for some minutes, Mignon opened it, and showed them into a parlour. He then told them that the nuns were preparing for the communion service, and requested that they would wait in a house, upon the opposite side of the street, where he would send to inform them when the exorcisms were to commence. The magistrates complied with this request, and retired, after warning Mignon of the complaint which Urban had laid against him.

The appointed hour was past, and Mignon, forgetting his promise, in not having sent for them, they all entered the convent chapel, where they were told that the whole of the day had been spent in exorcisms. The nuns were about to quit the choir, and Barré and Mignon, presenting themselves before the grate, informed them that they were then come from exorcising the two possessed women, who, thanks to their assiduity, were at length freed from the evil spirits who had so long tormented them. They added, that from seven in the morning they had laboured in concert; great miracles had taken place through their agency; but that they had not thought it expedient to admit any spectators, excepting the exorcists themselves, to be present. The seneschal observed that this manner of proceeding was not only illegal, but laid them open to suspicion as the suggesters of the possession and the instigators of a fraud; that the abbess having accused Grandier publicly, it was in public and not secretly, that the accusation should have been renewed and sustained; and that they behaved with great insolence, in having allowed persons of character and station to wait upon them an hour, and to tell them after all, that they were deemed unworthy of being present at the exorcism, which it was the sole object of their visit to attend. He warned them that, in his report, he should certainly take notice of the singular contradiction between their promises and their performance, as he had already done upon the former occasions, upon which they had broken their faith. Mignon answered that the sole object which he and Barré had had, was the expulsion of the demons; that this expulsion had been effected, and in that result, a great benefit had been bestowed upon the holy catholic faith. He added, that profiting by the control which they now held over the demons, they had commanded them, within eight days, to produce some great and miraculous event, which would place the guilt of Grandier, and the deliverance of the nuns, in so clear a light, that no one would, in future, doubt the truth of the possession. The magistrates prepared a report of what had taken place between them and the exorcists, which was signed by them all, with the exception of the lieutenant criminel, who declared, that agreeing as he did, with all which the exorcists had said, he would not contribute to increase the doubts, which were already, unfortunately, too widely diffused among worldly men.

Upon the same day, the seneschal made known to Grandier, the refusal of the lieutenant criminel, to sign the report. This news reached him, at the same time that he also learnt that his enemies had gained over to their side René Menim, mayor of the town, who had much influence, as well from his wealth as from the numerous posts which he held, and his numerous circle of influential friends, among whom was the duke cardinal himself, to whom he had once rendered some service.

The conspiracy began now to wear an alarming aspect, Grandier could no longer delay taking measures for his own safety. Remembering his conversation with the seneschal upon the preceding evening, and believing that he had been tacitly sent by the Bishop of Poitiers, he set off from Loudun to seek that prelate at his country-house of Dissay, accompanied by a priest of Loudun, named Jean Buron. But the bishop, expecting this visit, had already taken his measures; and Grandier was informed by his steward, a man of the name of Dupuis, that his eminence was unwell. Grandier then applied to his almoner, requesting him to make known to the bishop, that he had come with the intention of laying before him the reports which had been drawn up by the magistrates, respecting the events which were taking place at the Ursuline convent, and to complain of the calumnies which had been circulated concerning him. The almoner, thus pressed, could not avoid delivering Grandier's message; but after a short absence he returned, and said on the part of the bishop, and in the presence of Dupuis, of Buron, and of the Sieur Labrasse, that his eminence advised him to appear and make his charge before the royal judges, and that he trusted heartily that he might obtain justice. Grandier saw that he had been overreached, and felt more and more, that the net was closing around him, but he was not the man to take one backward step on this account. He immediately returned to Loudun, and applied once more to the seneschal, informed him of the result of his visit to Dissay, repeated his complaints of the calumnies of his enemies, and besought him to entreat the king's justice in this affair, demanding to be placed under the king's protection, and under the safe guard of the law. He added that such an accusation endangered not only his honour, but his life. The seneschal hastened to comply with Urban's request, prohibiting all persons whatever from further molesting or slandering him.

By this proceeding, the tables were completely turned: from playing the part of the accuser, Mignon now became the accused; his boldness being however sustained, by his having such powerful supporters of his cause, he presented himself upon the same day, at the seneschal's house, to inform him that while wholly disclaiming his jurisdiction, Grandier and himself, as priests in the diocese of Poitiers, having no power of appeal excepting to their bishop, he protested against Grandier's complaint, who branded him with the name of a calumniator, and expressed his willingness to deliver himself up, and be confined in any of the prisons in the diocese, so that all might be convinced that he had no fear of an inquiry; besides which, he had sworn an oath upon the holy sacrament, in the presence of his parishioners, that what he had done up to that day was not done for any hatred of Grandier, but for the love of truth, and the triumph of the catholic faith; by all which reasoning, he succeeded in gaining from the seneschal an order which he intimated to Grandier upon the same day.

Since the 13th of October, the day upon which the demons had been expelled by the exorcists, all had remained quiet in the convent; Grandier did not, however, allow himself to be drawn into a false security by this deceitful calm. He knew his enemies too well, to believe that they would stop now; and while conversing with the seneschal respecting this interval of repose, he remarked that the nuns were now studying other parts, in order to renew their drama with increased effect.

Accordingly, upon the 22d of November, René Mannouri, the surgeon of the convent, was sent to one of his brethren, named Gaspard Joubert, to request him to come accompanied by other medical men, residing in the town, to visit two nuns who were once more tormented by evil spirits.

Upon this occasion Mannouri was in error; Joubert was an honest and upright man, the enemy of all superstition, who, wishing to act his part in this affair lawfully and publicly, called upon the seneschal, to know if it was by his orders that he had been summoned. The seneschal replied in the negative, and inquired of Mannouri, by whom he had been sent to call in Joubert. Mannouri gave as his reason for requesting his presence, that one of the nuns had run in great terror to his house, to inform him that the possessed women had never on any former occasion been so ill treated as they now were, and brought Mignon their director's request, that he would instantly repair to the convent, bringing with him as many physicians and surgeons as could be found in the town.

The seneschal, who saw new machinations against Grandier in these events, immediately went in search of him, and warned him, that Barré had returned the evening before from Chinon, to recommence his exorcisms; adding that the rumour was already spread throughout the town, that the abbess and sister Claire were again troubled by evil spirits. This intelligence neither surprised nor discouraged him; he answered, with his usual disdainful smile, that he knew well it was a new conspiracy against him, that he had already complained at court of the first, and that he would immediately do the same with this, as he had done with the others; but that, knowing the seneschal's impartiality, he begged him always to be present at the exorcisms, so that if any real sign of possession was manifested, the nuns might be confined, and questioned by other lips besides those of Mignon and Barré, against whom he had such strong grounds for suspicion.

The seneschal wrote to the *procureur du roi*, who, malevolent as he was towards Grandier, was obliged to accede to what he proposed, which was this, that their *greffier* should be sent to the convent, to inquire of Mignon and Barré if the abbess was still possessed: if the answer should be in the affirmative, he was directed to inform them, that they were strictly forbidden from carrying on their exorcisms in secret, and enjoined that whenever they were about to take place, due notice should be sent to the seneschal, so that he, with such officers and medical men as he chose to take with him, should be present, that the penalties of disobedience would be rigidly enforced; and afterwards that justice should be done to Grandier, by his demand to have the nuns sequestrated and interrogated by unsuspected persons being acceded to. Mignon and Barré listened to these orders in silence, and replied, that they did not recognise the seneschal's jurisdiction in this affair; that once more summoned by the abbess and sister Claire, to assist them in the cure of their strange malady, which they held to be a possession of evil spirits, they had exorcised them up to that day, by right of a commission from the Bishop of Poitiers, and that the time for which this commission had been granted, not having yet expired, they would continue their exorcisms as much and as often as they pleased: that they had made known the new attack to that worthy prelate, so that he could either come himself, or send such other exorcists as best suited him, to decide upon the reality of the possession, which incredulous worldlings dared to treat as an imposture and an illusion, to the great contempt of God's glory and the catholic religion: and that further, they would not prevent the seneschal and the other officers, accompanied by the medical men, from seeing the nuns, until they received the bishop's reply, which they expected to have the next day: that it was for the nuns to open or shut their doors to them as they pleased; but as for them, they could but renew their declaration, that they did not recognise the seneschal for their judge, and that they did not believe he did right, not only in the matter of the exorcisms, but in all other things belonging to ecclesiastical jurisdiction, to set himself in opposition to a mandate issued by their superiors.

The *greffier* brought back this answer to the seneschal, who wishing to await the bishop's coming, or the new orders which he would send, put off his visit to the convent until next day. The next day came, but without any tidings of the prelate, or of any messenger sent by him, being received in Loudun.

At an early hour in the morning the seneschal applied for admission within the convent, but was informed that he could not be permitted to enter: he waited patiently until noon, and then seeing that no news had arrived from Dissay, and that the door still remained closed to him, he complied with a second petition of Grandier's, praying that Barré and Mignon should be prohibited from asking the abbess or any of the nuns questions, tending to blacken the reputation of the petitioner or of any other person. This decree was made known to Barré, as well as to the nuns, upon the same day. Barré with his courage still unshaken, continued to answer that the seneschal's authority could not prevent him from executing his bishop's commands, and declared that in future the exorcisms would be carried on with the assistance of the clergy alone, without calling in the laity, whose incredulity and impatience incessantly disturbed the solemnity necessary to so solemn an operation.

The day being almost passed without the bishop having arrived in Loudun, or any news being received from him, Grandier presented another petition to the seneschal, who immediately summoned the officers of the district together, to communicate it to them; but they refused to hear it, declaring upon their honours, that, without accusing Grandier of being the cause, they nevertheless believed the nuns to be really possessed, of which they were convinced by the evidence of devout ecclesiastics who had been present at the exorcisms. Such was the apparent reason of their refusal; the real one was that the *avocat du roi* was related to Mignon, while the *procureur du roi* was connected with Trinquant, to whom he had succeeded. Thus Grandier, who had already the ecclesiastical powers against him, now saw himself half condemned by the royal judges, who had but one more step to take from recognising the possession, to believing in the guilt of the magician who was supposed to have caused it.

Notwithstanding the signed declarations of the *avocat* and *procureur du roi*, the seneschal ordered the abbess and the lay sister to be removed and sequestered in separate houses, that each of them should have a nun as a companion, and that they should be attended, not only by their exorcists, but by women of integrity and delicacy, as well as by doctors and other persons, whom he, himself, would appoint to govern them, forbidding all other persons to approach them, without permission.

The *greffier* was sent to the convent, with orders to declare this decision to the nuns; but the abbess, after hearing it, replied, for herself and the whole community, that she did not recognise the jurisdiction of the seneschal; that they had a commission from the Bishop of Poitiers, dated the 18th of November, pointing out the course which he wished should be taken in the matter, and that she was prepared to put a copy of it in the seneschal's hands, so that he might have no excuse for feigning ignorance; that as to the proposed sequestration, she opposed it, that it was contrary to the oath which she had taken, and from which she could obtain dispensation from the bishop alone. This opposition being made in the presence of the Lady de Charnisay, the maternal aunt of the two nuns, and of the surgeon Mannouri, the relation of another, both united in protesting against the proposed outrage, and declared, that if it were persisted in, he himself should be taken to task by them. This answer was delivered to the seneschal, who directed that the parties should make application respecting the sequestration, and announced that, upon the next day, the 24th of November, he would repair to the convent to be present at the exorcisms.

Accordingly, the next day, at the appointed time, he summoned Daniel Roger, Vincent de Faux, Gaspard Joubert, and Matthew Fanson, all four being medical men, and letting them know with what object he required their presence, he ordered them to observe attentively the two nuns, whom he should point out to them, to investigate with the most scrupulous impartiality the causes of their malady, and to decide whether it was natural, supernatural, or assumed. After thus explaining to them the object of their visit, he repaired with them to the convent.

They were conducted into the church, and placed near the altar, separated by a grating from the choir, in which the nuns usually sang, and opposite to which the abbess was presently afterwards carried, reclining upon a little bed. Barré then said mass, and during the whole of the service, the abbess remained in strong convulsions, writhing about and rolling her eyes, so that nothing but the whites were visible.

Mass being concluded, Barré approached her to offer her the communion and to exorcise her; and holding the holy sacrament in his hand, he said to her:

"*Adora Deum tuum, creatorem tuum.*"	"Adore your God, your Creator."

The abbess remained silent for a brief space, as if she found much difficulty in expressing this declaration of love, at last she answered:

"*Adoro te.*"	"I adore thee."
"*Quem adoras?*"	"Whom do you adore?"

"*Jesus Christus*" (Jesus Christ), replied the nun, who was not aware that the verb *adoro* governs the accusative case.

At this error, which no sixth-form schoolboy could have made, a sudden burst of laughter arose from the choir, and Daniel Douin, the assessor of the provostship, could not refrain from saying aloud,

"Here have we a devil, who is not strong in the verbs active."

But Barré, perceiving in a moment the bad effect which had been produced by the abbess's nominative, inquired of her,—

"*Quis est iste quem adoras?*"	"Whom is it that you adore?"

He hoped that as, upon the first occasion, the possessed woman would reply *Jesus Christus:* he was deceived. "*Jesu Christe,*" she replied.

At this second error, contrary to the first rudiments of the Latin tongue, the laughter was redoubled, and several persons present cried out,

"Ah! Mr. Exorcist, this is but poor Latin."

Barré pretended not to hear these remarks, and inquired the name of the demon who was then within her. But the poor abbess, in great agitation at the unexpected effect which she had produced in her two last answers, remained silent for a long time, and at last pronounced the name of *Asmodée,* without venturing to latinize it. The exorcist next inquired how many devils the abbess had in her body. But to this question, she replied courageously, "*Sex*" (six). The seneschal upon this requested Barré to ask how many companions had he, but this answer had been provided, and the abbess replied briskly, "*Quinque*" (five). Asmodeus was a now a little re-established in the opinion of those present; but the seneschal having commanded the abbess to repeat in Greek what she had said in Latin, she returned no answer, and being adjured a second time, she immediately returned to her natural state.

The abbess having thus finished her performance for the time, a little nun, who now made her first appearance, was produced; she began by uttering the name of Grandier twice, apparently bursting with laughter; then turning to the auditory—"All that are here present," said she.

As it might easily be seen, that not much could be made of this new subject, she was quickly withdrawn, and Claire, the lay sister, who had already made her début in the abbess's room, was put into her place.

Hardly had she been placed in the choir, when she uttered a deep groan; but when she had been put upon the little bed, on which the abbess and the other sister had been already exorcised, laughter appeared to overcome all other feelings, and she cried,

"Grandier! Grandier! It must be bought in the market-place."

Barré immediately declared that these unconnected words were evident proofs of her possession, and approached the patient with the intention of exorcising her; sister Claire, however, grew rebellious, making as though she were about to spit in the exorcist's face, and putting out her tongue at him.

The exorcist then conjured her to name the demon, who was in her; she answered, "*Grandier.*" Barré repeated the question, to make her understand that she was in error: she then named the demon *Elimi*, but upon no persuasion, would she say how many devils accompanied him; seeing that she would not reply to this question, Barré then asked:

"*Quo pacto ingressus est dæmon?*" "By what compact has the devil entered you?"

"*Duplex*" (double), answered sister Claire.

This horror of the ablative case occasioned a new explosion of mirth from the whole audience, and it appeared that sister Claire's demon was as poor a Latin scholar as that of the abbess. Barré, fearing some new incongruity from the devils, then closed the scene and put it off to another day.

The hesitation which was visible in the replies of the nuns, demonstrating as they did to all right-thinking minds, the folly of this farce, encouraged the seneschal to sift the affair to the bottom. Consequently, about three o'clock in the afternoon, accompanied by his *greffier*, several magistrates, and a considerable number of the most influential men in Loudun, he once more visited the convent: he then declared to Barré, that he was come with the intention of having the abbess separated from sister Claire, in order to have each of them exorcised apart from the other. Barré dared make no opposition before so many witnesses, and the abbess was accordingly isolated and the exorcisms recommenced; she was immediately seized with convulsions similar to those with which she had been affected in the morning, excepting that her feet remained in a crooked position, a feat which was then executed for the first time. The exorcist, after several adjurations, repeated some prayers, and then asked her again the number and the name of the demons who possessed her; she replied three times, that one of them was named *Achaos.* The seneschal requested Barré to inquire if she was possessed *ex pacto magi, aut ex purâ voluntate Dei;* that is to say: If she was possessed by the compact of a magician, or by the pure will of God; the abbess answered, "*Non est voluntas Dei*" (It is not the will of God). Barré fearing the result of other questions, here interrupted by continuing his own, and inquired of her who the magician was:

"*Urbanus,*" replied the abbess.

"*Estne Urbanus papa?*" (Is it Urban the pope?) asked the exorcist.

"*Grandier,*" replied the abbess.

"*Quare ingressus es in corpus hujus puellæ?*" (Why have you entered the body of this young woman?) continued Barré.

"*Propter præsentiam tuam*" (On account of your presence) replied the abbess.

The seneschal here interrupted the dialogue, by demanding that the abbess should be interrogated upon questions which should be proposed to her by himself and the other officers; promising, that if she replied correctly to three or four questions, he, himself, as well as all who accompanied him, would acknowledge the truth of the possession, and sign a deposition to that effect. Barré accepted the challenge; but, unfortunately, the abbess at that moment came to herself, and, as it began to get late, the meeting broke up.

The next day, the 25th of November, the seneschal, with the greater part of the officers of the two sees, again repaired to the convent, and was taken, with his companions, into the choir. They had been there for some few minutes, when the curtains of the grating were withdrawn, and the abbess was perceived lying upon her bed. Barré began, as usual, by saying mass, during the celebration of which, the possessed woman was in strong convulsions, crying twice or thrice aloud, "Grandier! Grandier! wicked priest!" When mass was finished, the exorcist went behind the grate, with the pyx in his hand, placed it upon his head, and protested that his motive was pure, full of integrity, and free from all evil designs upon any one whatever, adjuring God to confound him if he had made use of any deception, suggestion, or persuasion, towards the nuns during the whole course of the inquiry.

Behind him came the prior of the carmelites, and made the same protestation and the same oaths; imprecating maledictions not only upon his own head, but also upon those of all the nuns, if he had, in any way, sinned throughout the affair. This action did not produce the salutary effect upon the assembly which the exorcists had expected, and some among them said aloud, that such conjurations were nearly akin to sacrilege.

Barré, hearing these murmurs, hastened to commence the exorcisms. He approached the abbess so as to offer her the communion; but, upon seeing him advancing, she went into terrible convulsions. He, however, by the assistance of holy words, overcame the abbess's aversion towards him, and put the host in her mouth; she immediately endeavoured to thrust it out of her mouth with her tongue, but the exorcist held it in its place with his fingers, and forbade the demon from compelling the abbess to spit it out. She then tried to swallow the bread; but complained that it stuck to her palate and throat. In order to make her swallow it, Barré made her take some water three times, and then, as upon the preceding occasions, he began interrogating the demon, demanding,—

"*Per quod pactum ingressus es in corpus hujus puellæ?*" "By what compact have you entered the body of this young woman?"

"*Aquâ*" (By water), replied the abbess.

Standing by the side of the abbess was a Scotchman named Strachan, who was principal of the reformed college at Loudun. Hearing this reply, he asked the demon to repeat the word *aqua* in the Scottish language, avowing, for himself and all present, that if he would give this proof of his knowledge of languages, which is the principal privilege of evil spirits, the reality of the possession would then receive belief. Barré did not seem at all embarrassed, and replied that he would comply with the wish, if God would allow him to do so; at the same time he ordered the demon to make the same reply in Scotch; but this commandment, although repeated twice, was useless, and upon its being asked a third time, the nun only answered,

"*Nimia curiositas.*" "Too much curiosity."

And being once more asked, she replied,

"*Deus non volo,*" she meant to say "*Deus non vult*" (God does not wish it), but had once more mistaken her conjugation, and put the first in place of the third person."

The principal of the college laughed heartily at this nonsense, and proposed to Barré to instruct his devil among his scholars of the seventh class. Barré, instead of accepting the offer, replied that the curiosity was indeed too great, and that he believed the devil was dispensed from answering.

"However," said the lieutenant civil, "you ought to know, sir, and, if you do not know it already, you may learn it from the ritual which you hold in your hand, that the power of speaking strange and unknown languages, is one of the proofs by which real possession is known, and that of telling things which are taking place at a distance is another."

"Sir," answered Barré, "the devil knows this language well enough, but he does not wish to speak it; in the same manner he is acquainted with your sins, which I will prove if you wish, by ordering him to recount them."

"You will give me great pleasure," replied the lieutenant civil, "and I consent with all my heart, to be offered such a proof of the truth of the possession."

Barré upon this advanced towards the nun, as if to interrogate her concerning the lieutenant civil's sins, but the seneschal interrupted him, by letting him know the impropriety of such a step. Barré replied that he had never had any intention of executing it.

In spite of all that Barré had said and done, to distract the attention or those present, many remained obstinate in wishing to know, if the devil did, or did not, understand foreign languages. The seneschal proposed to Barré that the answer should he made in Hebrew instead of in Scotch, which, being the most ancient of all languages, should be most familiar to the demon. This proposition was followed by such general applause, that Barré was compelled to order the possessed woman to say the word *aqua* in Hebrew. At this request, the poor woman, who had the greatest difficulty in saying the few Latin words which she had learnt, turned round with a visible movement of impatience, saying, "Ah! so much the worse."

These words being heard and repeated by those nearest to the bed, produced such a bad effect, that a Carmelite friar cried out, that she had not said *aqua* but *zaquar*, the Hebrew word, corresponding with the two Latin words, *effudi aquam* (I have poured out water). But as the word *aqua* had been plainly heard, the friar was unanimously hooted; and the sub-prior himself, advancing towards him, publicly reprimanded him, for having attempted a deception. To cut short all this discussion, the possessed woman again went into the convulsions, which usually announced the conclusion of the performance, and the company again dispersed, amusing themselves at the expense of a devil who was ignorant of Scotch and Hebrew, and not much better acquainted with Latin.

The seneschal and the lieutenant civil, however, wishing to have their breasts cleared of all their doubts, returned to the convent about three o'clock in the afternoon of the same day. They were soon joined by Barré, who, taking two or three turns in the park with them, said to the lieutenant civil, that he was surprised that he, who, upon a former occasion, had complained against Grandier, by command of the Bishop of Poitiers, should now support him in this instance. The lieutenant civil replied, that he would be still ready to complain if there was any ground of complaint, but that, as the matter now stood, he had but one object in view, which was, the discovery of the truth, and which object he trusted to attain. This answer did not satisfy Barré; he drew the seneschal aside, pointing out to him, that descended as he was from several persons of quality, who had all been possessed of considerable ecclesiastical dignities, and being at the head of all the officers of the town, he ought, if it were but for the sake of example, to testify less incredulity, respecting a possession which must, doubtless, redound to the advantage of the church and religion. The seneschal listened to this overture with great coldness; and having answered him, that what he did and always would do, should be instigated by justice and nothing else, Barré ceased to persist, and requested the two magistrates to go up to the abbess's room.

At the moment of their entry into the apartment, which was crowded with spectators, the abbess, seeing that Barré carried the holy pyx in his hand, fell into convulsions. Barré approached her, and again asking the demon, "*by what compact he had entered the young woman's body*," and receiving the former answer of "*by water*," he continued the interrogation as follows:

Q. "*Quis finis pacti?*"	"What is the object of this compact?"
A. "*Impuritas.*"	"Impurity."

At these words the seneschal interrupted the exorcist, and requested him to order the demon to say these three last words: *finis pacti, impuritas*, in Greek. But the abbess, who was already prepared with an evasive answer, escaped for this time with her *nimia curiositas*, with which reply Barré agreed, saying, that the curiosity was indeed too great. The seneschal was therefore compelled to give up his endeavours to make the demon speak Greek, as he had already failed to make her converse in Hebrew or Scottish. Barré then continued:

Q. "*Quis attulit pactum?*"	"Who brought the compact?"
A. "*Magus.*"	"A magician."
Q. "*Quale nomen magi?*"	"What is the magician's name?"
A. "*Urbanus.*"	"Urban."
Q. "*Quis Urbanus? est-ne Urbanus papa?*"	"What Urban? is it the pope?"
A. "*Grandier.*"	"Grandier."
Q. "*Cujus qualitatis?*"	"What is his quality?"
A. "*Curatus.*"	

This new and hitherto unknown word, produced a great effect upon the audience; but Barré did not leave time to allow it all the applause which it merited, continuing quickly,—

Q. "*Quis attulit aquam pacti?*"	"Who brought the water of the compact?"
A. "*Magus.*"	"The magician."
Q. "*Quâ horâ?*"	"At what hour?"
A. "*Septimâ.*"	"At the seventh."
Q. "*An matutinâ?*"	"Of the morning?"
A. "*Serò.*"	"Of the evening."
Q. "*Quomodò entravit?*"	"How did he enter?"
A. "*Januâ.*"	"By the gate."
Q. "*Quis vidit?*"	"Who saw him?"
A. "*Tres.*"	"Three."

Here Barré, to confirm the evidence of the devil, assured them, that supping with the abbess in her room upon the Sunday following her deliverance from the second possession, Mignon her confessor, and a nun, being also present, about seven in the evening, her arms became wet with water, without any person being seen to throw it. That he washed the arm as quickly as he could with holy water, and said some prayers, during which the abbess's prayer-books were twice taken out of her hands and thrown violently at her feet, and that at the moment when he was picking them up a second time, he received a blow, without seeing the hand which had struck him. Mignon corroborated his colleague's story, by a long narrative of what had taken place, finishing his speech by invoking the most terrible curses upon their heads, if they had swerved from the exact truth. Then addressing the assembly, he announced that, upon the next day, he would drive away the evil spirit, and invited all present to prepare themselves by penitence, and by taking the communion, to witness the miracles which should be shown to them upon the next great day.

The two last exorcisms had made a great sensation in the town; so that, although Grandier had not been present, he knew perfectly well all that had taken place. He accordingly went the next morning to present another petition to the seneschal, in which he set forth, that the nuns still continued, maliciously and upon suggestion, to name him as the author of their pretended possession. That, not only had he never had any communication with them, but he had not even ever seen them; that, to prove the influence of which he complained, it was absolutely necessary to sequestrate them; adding, that it was not right that Mignon and Barré, his mortal enemies, should direct them, and pass the day and night within their residence; that this proceeding alone made the fact of the suggestion visible and palpable; and that God's honour, as well as that of the petitioner, was involved in the question. Consequently, and on these considerations, he besought the seneschal to order the persons who pretended to be possessed, to be sequestrated and separated from each other; that they should be directed by churchmen, who were unsuspected by the suppliant, and assisted by medical men; and that, in case they should not choose to comply with the required sequestration, he besought him to complain of it as a denial of justice.

The seneschal wrote at the bottom of the petition, that it would be complied with upon the same day.

After Urban Grandier's petition, came the reports of the physicians who had been present at the exorcisms. In these reports, they said that they certainly recognised convulsive movements in the person of the lady abbess, but that one visit was not sufficient for them to give an opinion upon the cause of these movements; that they wished to see and to examine them more particularly, to be able to judge with certainty; that, with this object, they requested to be allowed to reside in the neighbourhood of the possessed women for some days and nights, to be permitted to treat them in the presence of the other nuns, as well as some of the magistrates; that it was also necessary that these women should receive their food and medicines from no other hands but theirs; that no one should touch them save openly, nor speak to them but aloud; and that then they would pledge themselves to give a true and faithful report of the cause of their convulsions.

As it was nine o'clock in the morning, the time at which the exorcisms were usually begun, the seneschal immediately set out for the convent, and found Barré saying mass, and the abbess in convulsions. As the magistrate entered the church, the elevation of the holy sacrament was just taking place. He perceived standing in the midst of the assembly, who were all devoutly kneeling, a young man named Dessentier, who remained with his hat upon his head. He immediately ordered him either to uncover or to retire. Upon this the abbess's convulsions were redoubled, and she cried out, that there were Huguenots present, and that it was their presence which gave the demon so much power over her. Barré then asked her how many there were, and she answered two; which clearly proved that the devil was no better arithmetician than scholar, as, besides Dessentier, there were among those present belonging to the reformed worship, the lawyer Abraham Gautier, his brother, four of his sisters, L'Elu, René Fourneau, and the procureur Angevin.

To divert the attention of the audience from this numerical error, Barré inquired of the abbess, if it was true, that she did not know Latin; and as she asserted that she did not know a single word, he ordered her to take an oath to that effect. She resisted at first, saying loud enough to be heard,

"My father, you force me to take great oaths, and I fear that God will punish me for it."

But Barré replied, "My daughter, you must swear for the glory of God."

And she swore. At this moment one of the spectators observed, that the abbess interpreted the catechism to her scholars. This she denied; confessing, however, that she could interpret the *Pater* and the *Credo*. As this interrogation began to get embarrassing the abbess put an end to it, by falling once more into convulsions; but the seneschal directed the exorcist to ask her where Grandier was. As this question was in accordance with the directions of the ritual, which says, that one of the proofs of possession is the faculty of naming, without seeing them, the places in which the persons of whom they are asked then happen to be, he was obliged to comply, and received for answer, that *Grandier was in the large saloon of the chateau*.

"That will be found to be false," answered the seneschal aloud; "for before coming here, I pointed out a house to Grandier, in which I desired him to remain and where he will be found, he having gladly complied with my request, in order to assist me in arriving at the truth."

He accordingly ordered Barré to name some of the monks present, to be sent to the chateau, accompanied by one of the magistrates and the *greffier*. Barré chose the prior of the Carmelites, and several others, who immediately set out upon their mission.

The abbess, after the seneschal's declaration, having remained silent, in spite of the exorcisms, Barré ordered sister Claire to be brought in, saying, that one devil would excite the other. But the seneschal made a formal opposition to this proposal, observing that this double exorcism could have no other result but that of causing confusion, in the midst of which some useful hint might be suggested to the abbess, and that he preferred waiting the return of the messengers, before commencing any new conjurations. However just this reasoning might have been, Barre took good care not to defer to it; for it was high time either to rid himself, by any means, of the seneschal and the other magistrates who shared his doubts, or else, by the help of sister Claire, to practise some deception upon them, which should cause these doubts to be dispelled. The second nun was then brought in, in spite of the opposition of the seneschal and the other officers, who, not wishing to appear as if lending a hand in such a palpable fraud, retired, declaring as they went,, that they neither could nor would be present any longer at this odious farce. In the court, they met the messengers who had first come from the chateau, where they had searched not only the large saloon, but all the other apartments in the building, without seeing Grandier; and had afterwards gone to the house of which the seneschal had spoken, and there they found the object of their search, along with several respectable persons, from whom they had learnt, that Grandier had been with them, without a moment's absence, for the last two hours. This was all that the magistrates wished to know; they went away, while the messengers informed those present of the result of their mission, which produced a great effect upon them. A Carmelite monk, wishing to remove this impression, and thinking that the devil would probably be more correct in his conjectures this time, asked the abbess, *where Grandier now was?* Without the slightest hesitation, she replied, *that he was walking with the seneschal in the church of St. Croix.* A new deputation was immediately sent out, who, not meeting any one in the church, went up to the court-house, where they found the seneschal on the bench; he was come direct from the convent, and had not even seen Grandier. Upon the same day, the nuns made known, that in future the exorcisms should not take place before the seneschal, or any of the officers who usually accompanied him, and that if, from thenceforth such witnesses were permitted to be present, they would refuse to answer.

Grandier seeing this impudence, and that the only man upon whose impartiality he could depend, would in future be excluded from the exorcisms, presented a new petition to the seneschal, in which he prayed that the nuns should be sequestrated; but the seneschal, dreading for the petitioner's own sake to grant him this application, assembled the most respectable inhabitants of the town, to hold a consultation as to the best course to be pursued for the public good. The result of this meeting was, that they wrote to the *procureur general* and to the Bishop of Poitiers, sending them copies of the reports which had been drawn up, and praying them by their authority and prudence, to check the course of these pernicious intrigues. The answer of the *procureur general* was to the effect, that it was a purely ecclesiastical affair, with which the courts of law had nothing to do. As to the Bishop of Poitiers, he returned no reply whatever.

He did not, however, keep the same silence with Grandier's enemies; for the failure of the exorcisms of the 26th November, having induced them to take additional precautions, they thought it prudent to obtain a new commission from this prelate, in which he should appoint some ecclesiastics to assist Mignon and Barré with the exorcisms. Barré went himself to Poitiers to present this petition, and the bishop appointed Bazile, dean of the canons of Champigny, and Demorans, dean of the canons of Thoars, both relations of Grandier's enemies.

These two commissioners, who had been previously informed of their appointment, repaired immediately to Loudun, where they arrived at the same time as Marescot, one of the queen's almoners The pious Anne of Austria, had heard so many different versions of the story of the possession of the nuns in the Ursuline convent, that she wished to search into the affair which, it will be seen, began to assume greater importance every day, since it had now reached even the court. The seneschal and the lieutenant civil, fearing that the royal messenger might allow himself to be abused, and would not give a report calculated to corroborate the facts which were contained in theirs, notwithstanding the refusal of the nuns to receive them, went to the convent upon the 1st of December, the day upon which the new commissioners were to recommence the exorcisms, accompanied by their assessors, the lieutenant of the provostship, and a clerk of the court. They knocked for a long time, without any attention being paid to them; at last the door was opened by one of the sisterhood, who informed them, that they could not be allowed to enter, adding, that they were suspected, having publicly given it out that the possession was nothing but a fraud and an imposture. The seneschal, without stopping to dispute with this girl, ordered her to fetch Barré to him, who, some time afterwards, made his appearance, arrayed in his sacerdotal robes, and followed by several persons, among whom was the queen's almoner. The seneschal made a complaint, that the door had been closed against himself and the officers who accompanied him, which was even contrary to the orders of the Bishop of Poitiers himself. Barré declared, that as far as he was concerned he had no wish to prevent them from entering.

"We are therefore come with this intention," said the seneschal, "to pray you, to ask this pretended demon, two or three questions, which we will propose, and which will be conformable to the prescribed form in the ritual; you will not refuse," added the seneschal, turning towards Marescot, and bowing to him, "to give this proof before the queen's almoner, which will be the best means of dissipating all the suspicions of imposture, which unfortunately are so widely spread concerning this affair."

"I shall do, in this matter, whatever I think proper, not what it pleases you to command," replied the exorcist, insolently.

"It is, nevertheless, your duty to proceed legally," replied the seneschal; "at least, if you act sincerely; for it would be an outrage to God to endeavour to increase his glory by a false miracle; and it would but sully the catholic religion, so powerful in itself, to endeavour to make its truths more striking by the aid of frauds and illusions."

"Sir," replied Barré, "I am an honest man, and knowing the duties of my charge, will acquit myself of them to the best of my power. As to you, you should remember, that the last time you left this church, you were inflamed with passion, which is a bad state of mind for a man, whose duty it is to do justice."

As all these discussions led to nothing, the magistrates insisted upon entering; but not being able to obtain any further consent than that the doors were open, they once more forbade the exorcists to ask any question, tending to defame any one, under the penalty of being treated as seditious agitators. To this threat Barré replied to the seneschal, that he did not recognize their authority; and shutting the door, he left him outside with the lieutenant civil.

There was now no time to lose, if they wished to set up any efficacious opposition to the past and future machinations against Grandier. He was advised by them to write to the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and they added to his letter the reports which had been drawn up, and the whole was immediately dispatched by a sure messenger to the Archbishop of Bordeaux. This worthy prelate, understanding the importance of the affair, and seeing that Grandier, abandoned to his enemies, would be lost by the slightest error, replied by himself arriving at his abbey of Jouin-les-Marnes, where he had once before acted with such noble justice to a poor persecuted priest.

It will be believed, that the arrival of the archbishop was a terrible blow to the cabal; for scarcely had he reached Saint-Jouin, before he sent his own physician, with orders to see the possessed women, and to examine the convulsions so as to be certain whether they were real or assumed. The physician presented himself at the convent, with a letter from the archbishop, commanding Mignon to allow him to have a clear insight into the whole state of things. Mignon received the physician with all the respect due to the prelate by whom he was sent; but he only said to him, that he wished he had arrived a day sooner, as, thanks to his exorcisms and those of Barré, the possessed women had been delivered of their tormentors the evening before. He took him, however, to see the abbess and sister Claire, whom the physician found calm and tranquil, as though they had never undergone any agitation. They confirmed what Mignon had said, and the physician returned to Saint-Jouin, without having any thing to state, excepting that perfect tranquillity then prevailed in the convent.

The fraud was apparent, and the archbishop thought that the infamous persecutions against Grandier were now finally terminated. But Grandier, knowing his enemies better, threw himself at his feet, upon the 27th of December, and besought him to grant a petition, in which he stated, that his enemies had endeavoured to crush him by a false and calumnious accusation; that for the last three months, they had given out and published to the world that he had sent evil spirits into the bodies of the sisters of Saint-Ursula at Loudun, whom he had never even seen; and further, that Jean Mignon and Pierre Barré being notoriously his mortal enemies, the direction and exorcism of the pretended possessed persons had been given to them; that in the reports drawn up by them, and which were in direct contradiction to those of the seneschal and the lieutenant civil, they made a boast of having driven out the pretended devils three or four times, but that, according to the account of these calumniators, they had upon each occasion returned, by virtue of compacts which were attributed to him; that such assertions, as well as Mignon and Barré's reports, were made with the object of defaming and dishonouring him; that although it was true that the presence of the worthy prelate had put the demons to flight for the present, it was probable that, reassured by his departure, they would quickly return to the charge, so that, if abandoned by the benevolence of him to whom he now addressed himself, he was certain that his innocence, evident as it was, must succumb beneath the artifices of such deadly enemies; that consequently he prayed, that, after examining all these reasons, it would please him to defend him from the attacks of Mignon, Barré, and their adherents, and in case of any new possession, to command that the exorcisms of the women who pretended to be possessed, should in future be directed by ecclesiastics and laymen of his appointment, to whom, if it was necessary, the entire care of the nuns should be given, and that the whole should be done in the presence of the magistrates of the district.

The Archbishop of Bordeaux pronounced an ordinance, appointing Sieur Barré, Father L'Escaye, a Jesuit, residing at Poitiers, and Father Gau, of the oratory, residing at Tours, to carry on the exorcisms in case of need; prohibiting any one else from interfering with them.

When this ordinance was communicated to the exorcists, the possession ceased so speedily and so entirely, that it ceased even to be longer talked about. The archbishop, nevertheless, still recommended to Grandier to exchange his benefices; but Grandier said that, though even he offered a bishopric, he would not accept of it at that time in exchange for his simple cure at Loudun.

The termination of this affair of the possession was extremely prejudicial to the nuns; for, instead of producing respect and plentiful donations, as Mignon had promised, the only result was public scorn and increased poverty; for the young ladies who boarded with them were taken away by their families. This situation threw them into despair; and it was known that at that time they had many altercations with their director, in which they reproached him bitterly with the sins he had made them commit, and the shame and misery he had brought upon them. Mignon himself, though inflamed with hatred, was obliged to keep quiet; but he had not given up the hope of vengeance; and as he was a man of determined perseverance, he remained in the back ground, closely watching Grandier, in order to embrace the first opportunity of again seizing the prey which had escaped him. Such an opportunity soon arrived.

It was in the year 1633, the period when Richelieu was in the height of his power. The cardinal was pursuing his work of destruction, pulling down castles when he could not destroy men, on the principle of John Knox; pull down the nests, and the rooks will fly away. Now, one of these nests was the castle of Loudun, and Richelieu had given orders to demolish it.

The person who came to Loudun, charged with this commission, was a man of that sort, whom, a hundred and fifty years before, Louis XI. had used to destroy feudalism, and Robespierre, in later times, to destroy aristocracy. Richelieu was the will, and Laubordemont the instrument. But he was an instrument full of intelligence, knowing, from the way in which he was set to work, what was the passion which excited his master, and then adapting himself to that passion with marvellous tact, whether it was fiery and rapid; whether it was slow and suppressed; whatever it was, he found the proper means to gratify it.

M. de Laubordemont arrived at Loudun in August, 1633, and addressed himself, in order to execute his commission, to the Sieur Memin de Silly, mayor of the town, and an old friend of the cardinal, whom Barré and Mignon, as we have already said, had gained over to their side. Memin saw in this arrival, the means of advancing the cause which he had espoused, and which had seemed lost. He introduced Mignon and all his friends to M. Laubordemont. He received them well: the superior, as we have said, was a relative of the formidable counsellor. They exaggerated the insult which he had suffered from the ordinance of the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and which affected all his family; and in a short time, Laubordemont was ready to join the conspirators in finding means to interest Cardinal Richelieu in their views.

The queen-mother, Mary of Medicis, had among her women a person of the name of Hammon, who having had, on some occasion, the good fortune to make herself agreeable to the princess, had some influence with her. She was born at Loudun of a family of the lower class, and had been brought up there. She was one of Grandier's parishioners, and he knew her intimately; and, as she was clever, took pleasure in her company. On some political occasion, a lampoon had appeared against the ministry, and especially the cardinal. This paper, which was full of talent, wit, and bitter sarcasm, had been ascribed to this woman, Hammon, who naturally shared her mistress's hatred against her enemy, and who, being protected by her, could not be punished by the cardinal, though he deeply resented the affront. The conspirators devised the scheme of attributing this satire to Grandier, who might have known from Hammon the particulars of the cardinal's private life which were alluded to in it. If the minister could be brought to believe this calumny, the matter was finished, and Grandier lost.

This point settled, M. Laubordement was carried to the convent, when, knowing what important personages expected them, the devils lost no time in returning. The nuns had miraculous convulsions, and M. de Laubordement returned to Paris quite convinced.

At the first word he uttered to the cardinal respecting Grandier, it was easy for him to see that he might have spared himself the trouble of fabricating the story of the lampoon, and that he had only to pronounce Grandier's name in the minister's hearing to produce all the irritation he could desire. The cardinal had formerly been prior of Coussay, and there he had had a quarrel about rank with Grandier, who, in his capacity of curate of Loudun, not only had refused to yield him precedence, but had actually assumed it. The cardinal had inscribed this affront in his bloody tablets, and Laubordement found him as eager to ruin Grandier as he was himself.

Laubordement, in the month of November, obtained a royal commission, authorizing him to proceed to Loudun, and take cognizance of Grandier's affair, conceived in terms which almost amounted to a sentence of condemnation. Furnished with these powers, he arrived at Loudun at nine o'clock in the evening, and, that he might not be seen, he stopped in the outskirts of the town, at the house of Paul Aubin, the son-in-law of the mayor, Memin de Silly. His arrival was so secret, that Grandier and his friends knew nothing of it: but Memin, Hervé, Menuau, and Mignon were informed of it, and immediately went to wait on him. Laubordement showed them his commission; but this commission, ample as it was, seemed to them defective: it contained no power to arrest Grandier, and Grandier might escape. Laubordement smiled, and drew from his pocket another ordinance of the same date, containing the power which they desired.

It was then resolved to show that the blow came from royal authority, and to intimidate any public officer who might still wish to take Grandier's part, or any witness who might give evidence in his favour, to arrest him as a preliminary to all other steps of procedure. They consequently sent for M. de Lagrange a municipal officer, to whom M. de Laubordement communicated his commission, ordering him to seize Grandier's person early next morning. M. de Lagrange answered that he would obey; but as he saw in these measures a murderous conspiracy, and not a regular judicial procedure, notwithstanding his family alliance with Memin, he sent notice to Grandier of the orders he had received. Grandier sent him thanks for his generosity, but said that, trusting in his innocence, and in the justice of heaven, he was resolved not to fly.

Grandier then remained, and his brother, who slept in the same room with him, afterwards said, that on that night he slept as tranquilly as usual. He rose at six in the morning, according to his custom, took his breviary in his hand, and went to matins in the church of St. Croix. But no sooner had he left his house than Lagrange, in presence of Memin, Mignon, and his other enemies, who had assembled to enjoy the sight, arrested him in the king's name. He was put into the hands of officers to be conveyed to the castle of Angers; while the royal seal was placed upon his rooms, his cabinets, and furniture: but in the search nothing was found which could compromise Grandier, excepting a treatise against the celibacy of priests, and some leaves on which were written, but not in his hand, some love verses in the taste of that day.

Grandier remained four months in that prison; he was, according to the accounts of the commandant of the place, and of his confessor, a model of constancy and resignation; passing his time in reading religious books, or in writing prayers and meditations, the manuscripts of which were produced on the trial. During this time, evidence was taken by Laubordement; and when it was finished in April, Urban was brought back to Loudun.

An extraordinary prison had been prepared for him in a house which belonged to Mignon himself, and which had been occupied by an officer called Bontemps, a former clerk of Trinquant's, and who had given evidence against Grandier in the former affair. This prison was in the uppermost floor; the windows had been walled up, leaving only a small opening towards the roof, which had been furnished with enormous bars; and, by way of further precaution, and to prevent the friends from carrying off the magician, the chimney had been closed with bars in the form of a gridiron. Moreover, small holes in hidden corners allowed Bontemps' wife to see at all times what Grandier did; a precaution which might be turned to account in the exorcisms. It was from this cell, lying on straw, and almost in darkness, that Grandier wrote to his mother, an old woman of seventy, the following letter:

"My dear Mother,—I have received your letter, and all that you have sent me, except the stockings. I bear my affliction with patience, and suffer more for you than for myself. I am very uncomfortable, having no bed. Try to get mine sent me; for if the body do not rest the spirit sinks. Send me also a breviary, a bible, and a St. Thomas, for my consolation; and do not afflict yourself. I hope that God will bring my innocence to light. I send my love to my brother and sister, and all our good friends. I am, my dear mother, your dutiful and obedient son."

During Grandier's imprisonment in the castle of Angers, the possessions multiplied wonderfully: not only the superior and sister Claire were possessed, but nine more of the sisterhood were the victims of evil spirits. They were separated into three divisions.

The superior, Louise des Anges, and Anne de St. Agnes, were placed in the house of M. Delaville, an advocate, the counsel of the sisterhood.

Sister Claire and Catherine of the Presentation were put into the house of the canon, Maurat; and Elisabeth de la Croix, Monique de Sainte-Marthe, Jeanne du Saint-Esprit, and Seraphique Archer, were provided with a third house.

All were overlooked by the sister of Memin de Silly, the wife of Moussant, and consequently allied with and related to, two of the greatest enemies of the accused, who learnt from Bontemps' wife all that it was necessary for the superior to know concerning him: this was what was called a sequestration.

The choice of physicians was not less unjust; instead of calling in the most learned practitioners of Angers, Tours, Poitiers, or Saumur, all of them, excepting Daniel Roger, who resided at Loudun, were brought from little villages, and chosen from uneducated men: so much was this the case, that one of them had not even obtained either his letters or degrees, and had been forced to leave Saumur on that account, and another had left a merchant's warehouse, in which he had been employed as salesman for ten years, in order to take the more lucrative profession of an empiric.

Nor was the choice of the apothecary and the surgeon any more plausible; the apothecary, who was called Adam, was Mignon's cousin-german, and had been a witness against Grandier in the first accusation which had been brought against him; and, as his evidence had compromised the honour of a young girl of Loudun, he had been condemned by a warrant of parliament to make her honourable amends. Notwithstanding, or perhaps on account of his hate to Grandier being well known, to him was assigned the preparation of the remedies, without any one overlooking him to see that the doses were not diminished or increased; so that, instead of quieting, he gave them exciting medicines, sufficient to bring on real convulsions. As to the surgeon, it was still worse, for he was Mannouri, nephew of Messire Memin de Silly, brother of one of the nuns, and the same who, in the second affair, had strenuously opposed the sequestration for which Grandier had applied, who was appointed with that office. The mother and father of the prisoner vainly presented petitions, in which they rejected the physicians as incapable, and the surgeon and apothecary as prejudiced; they could not even obtain certified copies of these petitions, although they engaged to prove by witnesses that upon one occasion, Adam had, in his ignorance, given a dose of *crocus metallorum* instead of *crocus martis*, which error had occasioned the death of the person who had taken the medicine. Grandier's ruin was thus so wholly resolved upon, that his enemies had not even the shame to endeavour to hide the infamous means by which it was to be brought about.

The action was carried on with activity. As one of the first formalities was the confrontation, Grandier published a factum, in which he desired to be allowed to imitate the example of St. Anastasius, who, he said, having been accused by an immodest woman, whom he had never seen, at the council of Tyre, when the woman came into the assembly publicly to accuse him, a priest, called Timotheus rose, and addressed her as if he himself had been Anastasius: thinking that it was indeed he, she replied, and the saint's innocence was made manifest to every one. Grandier demanded that two or three persons of the same height, and having the same coloured hair as himself, should be dressed exactly like him and presented to the nuns, being certain, that never having seen them, nor in all probability, having ever been seen by them, they would not know him, however much they might pretend to do so. This demand was so fair, and consequently so embarrassing, that it did not even receive an answer.

The Bishop of Poitiers, triumphant in his turn over the Archbishop of Bordeaux, who dared do nothing in opposition to an order emanating from the cardinal duke, had rejected Father L'Escaye and Father Gau, who had been appointed by his superior, and had put his doctor of divinity, who had been one of Grandier's judges when the first sentence was given against him, and Father Lactance, a Franciscan friar, in their places. These two monks did not even take the trouble of concealing to which party they belonged, but immediately went and resided in the house of Nicholas Moussant, and the day after their arrival, visited the superior, and began the exorcisms. At the first words, Father Lactance, perceiving that the possessed woman knew very little latin, and consequently did not feel much security in her interrogation, ordered her to answer in French, although he himself went on exorcising her in latin, and as some one had the boldness to insinuate, that the devil, who, according to the ritual, knew all living and dead languages, ought to answer in the same idiom as that which was used in questioning him, the father declared that the compact had been made in this manner, besides which he informed them, that there were devils who were more ignorant than peasants.

Besides these exorcists and the two Carmelites who had been mixed up in the affair from the beginning, there were added four Capuchins; so that the exorcisms could proceed more smoothly now than hitherto. The proceedings were held in four different places; namely, the church of St. Croix, the Ursuline convent, Saint-Pierre-du-Martray, and Notre-Dâme-du-Château. Very little of consequence, however, took place upon the exorcisms of the 15th and 16th of April; the declarations of the physicians simply saying, without any other remarks, *that the things which they had seen were supernatural, surpassing their knowledge as well as all the rules of medicine.*

The proceedings upon the 23d were more curious; the superior being asked by Father Lactance, in what form the demon had entered her, she replied that it had entered her in the forms of a cat, a dog, a stag, and a bone.

"*Quoties?*" inquired the exorcist.

"I did not notice the day, exactly," answered the superior.

The poor girl had mistaken *quoties* for *quando.*

It was doubtless with the intention of revenging herself for this error, that the superior declared upon the same day, that Grandier had five marks upon his body which had been made by the devil, and that insensible everywhere else, he was vulnerable in these places alone. Accordingly orders were given to the surgeon, Mannouri, to examine into the truth of this assertion, and the day upon which this examination was appointed to take place, was the 26th of that month.

In obedience to the commission which he had received, upon the morning of the 26th, Mannouri was introduced into Grandier's prison, and having made him strip naked, and shave his whole body; he had his eyes bound, and ordered him to lie at full length upon a table; the devil was however again wrong; Grandier, instead of having five marks had only two, one upon the shoulder blade and the other upon the thigh.

Then was enacted one of the most atrocious scenes which the human mind can picture. Mannouri held in his hand a probe with a spring, into which the needle closed at pleasure: to all parts of Grandier's body, which, according to the superior's account were insensible, Mannouri let go the spring, and while apparently thrusting the probe into his flesh, it really caused no pain at all to the prisoner, but when he came to the marks which had been pointed out as vulnerable, the surgeon, holding the the spring, stuck the point of the probe into his body to the depth of some inches, which made poor Grandier, who had not expected it, utter so agonizing a cry, that to those who had not been able to enter, and were waiting in the street, it was perfectly audible. From the mark upon the back, with which he had began, Mannouri passed to that upon the thigh, into which he thrust the probe as far as it would go, but to his great surprise, Grandier gave no cry, uttered no complaint. Not even a groan escaped him; he began, on the contrary, to pray, and although Mannouri continued his barbarity, by wounding him twice upon each of the vulnerable points, he could wring from the prisoner no other exclamation than prayers for his butchers.

M. de Laubordement was present at this scene.

The next day, the superior was exorcised in such strong terms, that the devil was compelled to confess that Grandier had not five but two marks upon him. This time, however, to the great astonishment of the crowd, he pointed out the exact places where they would be found.

Unfortunately for the demon, a joke which he made upon the same occasion, neutralized the effect of this first declaration. Being asked why he had refused to speak upon the preceding Saturday, he replied that he was not at Loudun upon that day, having been engaged all the morning in conducting the soul of Le Proust, the procureur of the parliament at Paris, to hell. This reply seemed so incredible to some worldly-minded persons present, that they took the trouble of examining the register of deaths upon that Saturday, the result of which examination was that not only did no procureur of the name of Le Proust expire upon that day, but no person at all of that name. This detection made the demon less affable if not less terrible.

During this time, the other exorcisms also met with similar checks; the holy father of St. Thomas, who operated in the Carmelite church, having asked one of the possessed women where Grandier kept his magical books, she replied, that they would be found in the apartments of a certain young lady, whom she named, and who was the same person to whom Adam had made honourable amends for a former calumny. Laubordemont, Moussant, Hervé, and Menuau, immediately repaired to this young lady's dwelling, searched the rooms and the closets, rummaged boxes, and places until then held most secret, but in vain. Upon returning to the church, they reproached the demon with having deceived them; but the demon answered that a niece of the lady had in the interim removed the books in question. This niece was now in turn immediately visited: she was, however, unfortunately not at home, but in a church, in which, since the morning, she had been employed in her devotions, and from which the priests and attendants of the church protested she had not stirred from the time of her first coming. Notwithstanding the wish of the exorcists to oblige Adam, they were forced to let this case fall to the ground.

These two false assertions having swelled the numbers of the unbelievers, the 4th of May was appointed as the day upon which the most interesting of the proceedings was to take place; the programme was indeed sufficient to excite general curiosity. Asmodeus had promised to raise the superior two feet from the ground, and Earas and Cerberus, excited by the example of their chief, engaged themselves to do as much to the other nuns; and a fourth demon, called Behérit, even went further, and not fearing to attack M. de Laubordemont himself, declared, that for his part, he would raise the counsellor's cap from his head, and keep it suspended in the air, until such time as a *miserere* could be said; besides this, the exorcists had challenged six of the most robust men that could be found, to hold down the feeblest of the nuns, or prevent her from making the usual contortions.

It will be believed that the promise of such a sight brought a crowd to the church, which filled it to overflowing. The proceedings began as usual, with the superior, and Father Lactance summoned Asmodeus to redeem his promise, by lifting her from the ground: the superior then made two or three springs upon her mattress, and appeared for a moment as if really supported in the air; but one of the spectators raising the covering, discovered that she was supporting herself upon her toes; cleverly done, no doubt, but certainly not miraculously. Upon this discovery bursts of laughter arose from all sides; and this explosion of hilarity intimidated Earas and Cerberus to such a degree, that they could not even get answers from them, to the adjurations of the exorcists. Recourse was then had to Béhérit, who answered that he was ready to lift M. de Laubordemont's cap, and that the thing would have been done after a quarter of an hour was elapsed.

But as upon this day the exorcisms had been appointed to take place in the evening instead of in the morning, which was the usual time of performance, and as the night, favourable to illusions, was now setting in, it was thought by many incredulous persons that Béhérit's demand of a quarter of an hour was done only to gain time, in order to perform his promise by lamplight, which makes all magic easy. They remarked besides, that M. de Laubordemont was seated at some distance from the other spectators, and exactly under one of the arches of the church, in the middle of which there was a hole, through which was passed the rope of the church bell. They then left the church, and ascending into the steeple, they hid themselves in a corner of the highest story. They had not been there long when a man approached them, and began working at something; they immediately surrounded him, and took from his hand a long line composed of a single horsehair, to the end of which a small fish-hook was attached; the man, surprised and confused, let go his line and took to flight. The result was, that although M. de Laubordemont, the exorcists, and the whole assembly waited in anxious expectation of seeing the cap raised into the air, it remained fixed upon the judge's head, to the great confusion of Father Lactance, who, not knowing what had taken place, and believing that it was only some delay adjured Béhérit three or four times to fulfil the promise which he had made, and was at length obliged to confess that the devil had failed.

The 4th of May was an unfortunate day for the exorcists; up to that time nothing had succeeded, and never had the demons been so awkward or appeared so powerless. Fortunately, the exorcists seemed certain of their last hope, which was that a weak nun would escape from the hands of six men, chosen from among the strongest, and who would in vain endeavour to hold her down. Accordingly, two Capuchins and two Carmelites went round the assembly, and returned into the choir with six copies of Hercules, who had been chosen from among the street porters of the town.

This time the devil proved that if he was not skilful he was strong; for, although held down upon her mattress by these six men, the superior, after some exorcisms, went into such terrible convulsions, that she escaped from their hands, and one of those who endeavoured to hold her was knocked down. This was successfully repeated three times, and belief began once more to be in the ascendancy among the assembly, when a physician of Saumur, named Duncan, suspecting that this was some prearranged affair, entered the choir, ordered the six men to go away, and declared that he alone would hold the superior, and that if she escaped from his hands, he would offer her any honourable amends for his incredulity. M. de Laubordemont endeavoured to oppose this proof, terming Duncan a worldling and an atheist; but as he was much esteemed, as well from his learning as from his integrity, such a tumult arose among the assembly at his being forbidden to put the devil's strength to the proof, that the exorcists were compelled to permit it. The choir was soon emptied of the six porters, who, instead of taking their places in the church again, went out by the sacristan; and Duncan advancing to the superior's bedside, seized her by the wrist, and after making sure that he held her fast, he said to the exorcists that they might begin.

Never until then had a struggle between general opinion and the particular interest of a few, been thus decided face to face; a dead silence reigned throughout the assembly, who remained motionless, their eyes fixed in anxious expectation of what was about to take place.

After a moment's pause, Father Lactance pronounced the sacred words, and the superior fell into convulsions; but this time it seemed as though Duncan had more strength in his single body than the six men who had preceded him had had in theirs united; for, although the nun sprang and writhed about as much as before, her arm remained fast within Duncan's hand, until, at last, tired and overcome, she sank upon her bed, saying, "I cannot; he holds me."

"Let go her arm," shouted Father Lactance, furious with rage, "how can she have convulsions if you hold her?"

"If it is really a demon that possesses her," replied Duncan, in a loud voice, "he should be stronger than I, since the ritual, among the other marks of possession, indicates their strength as being far above that of human nature."

"It is badly argued," replied Lactance, eagerly; "though it is true that a demon out of the body is stronger than you; yet being as it now is, in a feeble body such as this, it is impossible that it should be as strong as you, for its natural actions are proportioned to the strength of the body which it possesses."

"Enough, enough," said M. de Laubordemont, "we are not come here to dispute with philosophers, but to edify Christians."

So saying, he rose from his chair in the midst of a terrible tumult, and the whole assembly retired in disorder, more like people issuing from a theatre than from a church.

From their ill success upon this occasion, nothing remarkable was attempted for some days, and a great number of gentlemen and men of quality who had come to Loudun in the expectation of witnessing miracles, seeing that nothing wonderful was to be shown to them, began to think it was not worth the trouble of living there any longer, and took their departure. Father Tranquille, one of the exorcists, complains of this in a little volume which he published concerning this event. "Several persons," says he, "having come to Loudun to witness miracles, and finding that the devils did not make the signs which were asked of them, have gone discontented away, and swelled the number of the incredulous." In order to put a stop to this desertion, it was then resolved, that they should prepare some great event, which would arouse the curiosity and reanimate the faith of the people; accordingly father Lactance announced, that upon the 20th of May, three out of the seven devils who possessed the superior, would come out of her, leaving three wounds upon her left side, and as many holes upon her chemise, her petticoat, and her dress: these three devils were Asmodeus, Grésil of the Thrones, and Aman of the Powers. And it was added, that the superior's hands would be fastened behind her back when these wounds were made.

The day came, the church of St. Croix was filled with the curious, anxious to know whether the devils would keep their words better this time than upon the last occasion. The physicians were first requested to approach, and invited to examine the superior's side, her petticoat, chemise, and dress: as Duncan was present among the other physicians whom they had not dared to refuse admittance, notwithstanding the hatred with which they regarded him, it was impossible that the public were as yet imposed upon. The physicians examined the superior, and drew up their report as follows: "That they had found no wound upon her side, no hole in her vestments, nor any sharp weapon concealed in the folds of her robes." After this had been read, father Lactance interrogated her for nearly two hours in French, and the answers were made in the same language: from questions he passed to adjurations; upon which Duncan advanced, and reminded him that he had promised that the superior's hands should be bound behind her back, to take away all suspicion of fraud or deceit, and that the time was come for this promise to be fulfilled. Father Lactance allowed the justice of this request, but at the same time observed, that as there were many persons in the assembly who had never seen the convulsions into which the possessed woman fell, it was but proper that she should be exorcised for their satisfaction previous to being bound: he accordingly recommenced the exorcisms, and the superior immediately fell into strong convulsions, which, after lasting for some time, ended in complete insensibility. The possessed woman than fell with her face to the ground, and turning herself upon her arm and left side, she remained motionless for some moments in this position: she then uttered an involuntary cry of pain, followed by a deep groan. The physicians advanced towards her, and Duncan observing that she took her right hand from her left side, he seized her by the arm, and perceived that the ends of her fingers were bloody; he immediately laid fast hold of her dress, examined it as well as her body, and discovered that the superior's robe was pierced in three places, and her petticoat and chemise the same, the holes being in circumference about the size of a finger. The physicians found that the skin was also pierced in three places under the left breast, but the wounds were so insignificant that they scarcely penetrated the skin, although the blood which had issued from them was sufficient to colour the chemise.

The fraud was once more so gross and palpable that Laubordemont himself was confused, owing to the number and the quality of the spectators; he did not, therefore, wish to allow the physicians to add to their attestations the opinion which they formed of the causes of the three wounds; but Grandier protested against this in a *factum* which he prepared upon the same night, and which was distributed the next day; in this he observed:

"That had the superior suppressed her pain and refrained from groaning, the physicians would not have examined her, but would have suffered her to have been bound, never imagining that the wounds were already made; that then the exorcists would have commanded the three demons to go out of her, and to make the marks which they had promised; that then the superior would have made the strongest contortions of which she was capable, and would have had a long convulsion, at the end of which she would have been delivered, and the wounds would have been discovered upon her body; but that her groans, which had betrayed her, had defeated, by God's permission, the best concerted measures of men and devils. Why do you think," added he, "that they should choose wounds resembling such as are made by steel, when devils are accustomed to leave sores, such as are left by fire? Was it not because it was more easy for the superior to hide some steel weapon with which to wound herself slightly, than to conceal fire, with which to cause a burn? Why should you think, that they should have chosen the left side, rather than the forehead, or the nose, were it not that she could not have wounded herself upon the forehead or the nose, without exposing the action to the eyes of the whole assembly? Why should they have chosen the left rather than the right side, if it had not been, that it was more easy for the right hand, which the superior had used, to stretch over to the left side than to inflict the wound upon the right? Why did she lean upon her arm and her left side, if it were not, that, in that posture, in which she remained for some time, she facilitated the concealment of the weapon with which she wounded herself? From whence think you, came the groan, which she uttered in spite of herself, if not from the sense of pain, which was within her, the most courageous persons not being able to help crying out when the surgeon inflicts a wound upon them? Why should the ends of her fingers have been bloody, if it was not because they held the weapon which had drawn the blood? Who can avoid seeing that this weapon having been very small, it was impossible to prevent her fingers from being stained with the blood which flowed from the wound? Whence comes it that these wounds which did not pierce beyond the outer skin, were so slight, when, on the contrary, it was the practice of demons to break up and destroy the demoniacs when they left them, if it were not that the superior loved herself too well to make the wounds deep or dangerous."

Notwithstanding Urban Grandier's logical protestation, and the visible fraud on the part of the exorcists, M. de Laubardemont did not hesitate in preparing a verbal process, of the expulsion of the three demons, Asmodeus, Grésil, and Aman, from the body of sister Jeanne des Anges, by means of three wounds, which were made under the region of the heart. This verbal process was audaciously produced against Grandier, the minute of which still exists as a monument, not only of credulity and superstition, but of hatred and revenge. Father Lactance, upon his part, in order to dissipate the suspicions, which the pretended miracle of the preceding evening, had given birth to among the spectators, enquired the next day of Balaam, one of the four demons, who still remained in the superior's body, why Asmodeus and his two companions had gone out of her, when, contrary to their promise, the face and hands of the superior, were hidden from the eyes of the people.

"It was done," replied Balaam, "to keep them in their incredulity."

Father Tranquille also railed at the discontented, in a little book which he published concerning this affair. "Certes, they have cause," says he, "to be offended with the want of civility and courtesy shown by these demons, who have not had regard to the quality of their persons; but if the greater part of these people, had searched their consciences, they would have probably discovered that their discontent, was owing to this cause.

Nothing of importance took place from the 20th of May until the 13th of June, when a new miracle was enacted, by the superior vomiting the quill of a pen, about the length of a finger. It was, doubtless, this that caused the Bishop of Poitiers to determine upon coming himself to Loudun, not only, as he said, to those who wished him to examine into the truth of the possession, but also to make those believe who still doubted, and to discover the schools of magic, from which Urban had learnt his knowledge. It was now spread amongst the people, that they must believe in the possession, since the king, the cardinal duke, and the bishop believed in it; and that those who persisted in doubting, would render themselves guilty of high treason, both to the divine and human law, and expose themselves, as accomplices of Grandier, to Laubordemont's sanguinary justice. "This we may say with truth," writes Father Tranquille, "that it is the work of God, since it is the work of the king."

The bishop's arrival opened a new scene in these proceedings: an occular witness, a good catholic and firm believer in the possession, has left a manuscript account of what followed, more curious than any thing which we ourselves can relate. We lay it, as it was originally written, before our readers.

"Upon Wednesday, the 23rd of June, 1634, the eve of St. John, about three o'clock in the afternoon, Monseigneur de Poitiers and M. de Laubordemont, being engaged in the exorcism of the Ursuline nuns, in the church of St. Croix at Loudun, by the order of M. de Laubordemont, Urban Grandier, a priest, was brought from prison into the said church, accused of being a magician by the said possessed nuns; to which Urban Grandier, priest, four compacts were shown by the said M. de Laubordemont, mentioned on divers occasions by the said possessed nuns, in the preceding exorcisms, which the devils, who possessed them, affirmed to have been made, several times, with the said Urban Grandier, but particularly one, made with Leviathan, upon Saturday the 17th of the present month, which was composed of the flesh of a child's heart, taken upon a witch's sabbath, at Orleans, in 1631, from the ashes of a burnt victim, by the said Urban Grandier, by which compact, Leviathan had entered the body of sister Jeanne des Anges, superior of the said nuns, and had possessed her, along with Béhérit, Earas, and Balaam, and this was the 8th of December, 1632. The other compact, composed of pomegranate seeds, which were vomited by Asmodeus, then possessing sister Agnes, upon Thursday the 22d of the present month; made between the said Grandier, Asmodeus, and a number of other devils, to prevent the fulfilment of Béhérit's promises, who had promised, as a sign of his going out, to lift M. de Laubordemont's cap from his head, during the reading of a *miserere*. All of which compacts being shown to the said Grandier, he declared, without any signs of astonishment, but with great boldness and resolution, that he knew nothing whatever of the said compacts, that he had never seen them, nor was he acquainted with any art by which such things might be effected; that he had never had any communication with devils, and was entirely ignorant of what they had said of him; a minute of the charge and the reply was then made, which he signed.

"This being done, all the above-mentioned possessed nuns, to the number of ten or eleven, comprising three lay sisters, also possessed, were brought into the choir of the said church, accompanied by a number of Carmelite, Capuchin, and Franciscan monks. Upon their entrance, the possessed nuns addressed the said Grandier as their master, and showed great joy at seeing him. Upon this, Father Lactance, a Franciscan monk, and one of the exorcists, exhorted all persons present to raise their hearts to God, with extraordinary fervour, to lament the indignities offered to that adorable majesty, and to implore him, that such sins should be no obstacle to the designs of his providence, for his glory upon this occasion; and for an external mark of internal contrition, to say the *confiteor*, and to receive the benediction of Monseigneur the Bishop of Poitiers. This having been done, he proceeded to say, that the affair in which they were engaged, was of such great importance to the truths of the Roman Catholic Church, that this consideration alone ought to be a sufficient reason to excite their devotion, and that, besides this, the malady of these poor women was so strange, and had lasted so long a time, that charity obliged all those, who had the privilege of labouring for their deliverance, and for the expulsion of the demons, to employ themselves in so worthy an undertaking, by the exorcisms which the church had prescribed for the use of its pastors; then turning to the said Grandier, he said to him, that he, being among that number, ought to contribute his whole power and zeal to this object, provided the bishop were pleased to grant him permission to do so, and to commute the suspension of his authority; to which proposal, the said bishop having agreed, the Franciscan father presented a stole to Grandier, who, turning towards Monseigneur of Poitiers, inquired if he was permitted to take it; receiving an answer in the affirmative, he put the said stole on his neck, and he was then offered a Ritual, which he asked in the same manner as before to be allowed to take; then prostrating himself at the bishop's feet to kiss them, he received his blessing, after which, the *Veni Creator Spiritus* having been sung, he rose and addressed the Bishop of Poitiers, saying, "*My lord, whom am I to exorcise?*" and being answered by the said bishop, "*These girls,*" he again asked, "*What girls?*" and being answered, "*These possessed girls?*"—"Thus," said he, "my lord, I am compelled to believe in the possession. The church believes it, and I believe it also, although my opinion is, that a magician cannot possess a Christian with a devil, without his consent." Upon this, some one cried out that he was a heretic to advance such an opinion; that that truth was indubitable, unanimously received throughout the church, and approved of by the Sorbonne; to which he replied, that he had not determined his opinion upon that point; that it was simply his thought; that, at all events, he submitted to the opinion of the whole church, of which he was but a member, and that no person could be accounted a heretic for having had doubts, but for obstinately persisting in them; that what he had proposed to the said lord bishop, was done with the intention of being assured by his mouth, that he would not abuse the authority of the church. Being then led by the Franciscan monk to sister Catherine, she being the most ignorant of them all, and consequently the least likely to understand Latin, he commenced the exorcism, in the prescribed form of the Ritual. But, at the first interrogation, he was compelled to stop, as all the other nuns were immediately tormented by the demons, uttering strange and horrible cries; and among the rest, sister Claire advanced towards him, and reproached him for his blindness and obstinacy; so that, in the altercation which ensued, he was obliged to leave the other possessed nun, with whom he had commenced, and address himself to the said sister Claire, who, during the whole of the exorcism, continued to speak through thick and thin, without paying any attention to Grandier's questions, which were again interrupted by the Superior-mother, to whom he then turned, leaving the said sister Claire. But it is to be remarked, that previous to the commencement of the exorcism, he said to her, speaking in latin, that he knew well that she understood latin, and he therefore wished to question her in Greek. To which the devil answered by the mouth of the possessed woman: "Ah! You are cunning, you know well that one of the first conditions of the compact between you and me was, that I should not answer in Greek!" To which he cried, "*O pulchra illusio, egregia evasio!*" (O fair illusion, excellent evasion!) The devil then said, that he would allow him to exorcise in Greek, provided that he first wrote down what he wished to say. The said possessed woman, however, offered to answer him in whatever language he pleased; but whenever he began, all the other nuns recommenced their cries with unparalleled rage and despair, making the strangest and most varied contortions, persisting in accusing the said Grandier of the magic and witchcraft which was tormenting them, offering to break his neck if he would allow them; and making all sorts of efforts to do him violence, which was prevented by the powers of the church, and by the exertions of the priests and monks there present, in repressing the fury with which they were all agitated. He, however, remained calm and without showing any emotion, gazing fixedly at the said possessed nuns, protesting his innocence, and praying to God to become his protector. Addressing the bishop and M. Laubordemont, he said to them that he implored the ecclesiastical and royal authority, whose ministers they were, to command these demons to break his neck, or at any rate to cause a visible mark upon his forehead, if he was, as they asserted, the author of the crime of which he was accused, so that by this means the glory of God might be manifested, the authority of the Church exalted, and himself confounded: provided always, that these girls did not touch him with their hands. To this they would not consent, both because they did not wish to be answerable for any harm which might befal him, and because they would not expose the authority of the Church to the cunning of demons, who might have contracted some compact with the said Grandier upon this point. Then the exorcists, to the number of eight, commanded the devils to be silent and to cease the tumult which they were making, and fire being brought in upon a chafing-dish, into which all the compacts were thrown one after the other; upon which the former confusion was redoubled with the most horrible violence, and with such fearful cries and gestures, that the assembly might have passed for a witch's sabbath, had it not been for the sanctity of the place in which it was held, and the quality of the persons of whom it was composed, the least astonished of whom, at least in exterior, being the said Grandier, although he had the most reason to be so. The devils continued their accusations, citing the places, hours, and days, of their communications with him; his former witchcrafts, his offences, his insensibility, and his renouncement of God; to which he replied boldly, that he denied these calumnies, which were the more unjust as they emanated from his own profession; that he renounced Satan and all his devils; that he knew nothing of them, and apprehended them still less; that he was a Christian in spite of them; that he trusted in God and Jesus Christ, although perhaps a great sinner; but he denied being guilty of the abominations imputed to him, and defied them to give any authentic or pertinent proof of his guilt.

"Words can give no idea of what followed Grandier's declaration; the eyes and ears of the spectators appeared to see and hear so many furies, nothing like it was ever seen before, and excepting to persons accustomed to such fearful sights, such as those who sacrifice to demons, no human mind could have remained free from astonishment and horror at this scene. Grandier, alone, in the midst of it all, remained himself, that is to say, insensible to all these wonders, singing hymns to the Lord with the rest of the spectators, and appearing as bold as if he had had a legion of angels to protect him; one of these devils now cried out that Belzebuth was then between him and father Tranquille, the Capuchin; upon which, Grandier, addressing the demon, said, '*Obmutescas*' (be silent); and the said devil began swearing that that was their watchword, but that they were obliged to tell all, God being incomparably stronger than all hell: the whole of them now wished to throw themselves upon him, offering to destroy him, to show the marks upon him, and to strangle him, although he was their master: upon which he took the opportunity of saying that he was neither their master nor their servant, and that it was incredible that in their confession they should at once own him as their master, and wish to strangle him; upon which the girls became frantic, and threw their slippers at his head: 'Behold,' said he, smiling, 'behold devils who impeach themselves.'

"Their violence at length reached to such a point, that had it not been for the protection of the people in the choir, the author of this scene would infallibly have lost his life, and all that they could do was to make him leave the said church, and to remove him from the furies who threatened him. He was then conducted back to prison about six o'clock in the evening, and the rest of the day was employed in liberating the minds of these poor girls from the possession of the devils, which they had no small difficulty in accomplishing."

Every one, however, did not judge these possessed women with the same indulgence as that shown to them by the author of this narrative, and many saw in this scene of cries and convulsions an infamous and sacrilegious orgy of vengeance; such opposite opinions were given upon the affair, that upon the 2d of July, the following ordinance was affixed to all the street corners, and proclaimed throughout the town:

"It is expressly forbidden to all persons, of whatever rank or condition, to slander or otherwise speak against the nuns and other persons of Loudun, who are afflicted with evil spirits, their exorcists, or those who assist at the exorcisms, in any fashion or manner whatever, on pain of a fine of ten thousand livres; and that none may affect ignorance, this present ordinance will be read and proclaimed this day in the parish churches of this town, and affixed to the gates of the said churches as well as everywhere else where they are needed.

"Given at Loudun, the 2d of July, 1634."

This proclamation was too powerful for the worldlings, and counting from this time, if they did not believe the more, at any rate, they did not dare to confess their incredulity aloud; but to the shame of the judges, the nuns themselves now repented; for the day after the impious scene which we have related, just as Father Lactance was about to exorcise sister Claire, in the church of the château, she rose up in tears, and turning to the people, so as to be heard by all, she began by taking heaven to witness, that upon this occasion she was speaking the truth. She then confessed that all she had said, for the last fortnight, against the unfortunate Grandier, was calumny and imposture, and that all she had done was by the suggestion of the Franciscan, Mignon, and the Carmelites. But Father Lactance was not frightened so easily; he replied to sister Claire, that all she was saying was but a trick of the demon to save his master, Grandier. The nun then made an energetic appeal to M. de Laubordement and to M. de Poitiers, demanding to be sequestrated, and put under the charge of other ecclesiastics, than those who had been the destruction of her soul, by inducing her to give false evidence against an innocent man; but the Bishop of Poitiers and M. de Laubordemont did but laugh at the devil's cunning, and ordered her to be taken back to the house in which she lived. Upon hearing this command, sister Claire rushed out of the choir to make her escape by the gate of the church, adjuring those who were present to come to her aid, and to save her from eternal damnation. But no one dared to move a step, so well had the terrible ordinance had its desired effect: sister Claire was seized, and in spite of her cries, taken back to the house in which she was sequestrated, never more to leave it.

A still stranger scene took place upon the day after: while M. de Laubordemont was questioning a nun, the superior came down into the court, with naked feet, and a rope round her neck, in the midst of a frightful storm, and there she remained for two hours, without fearing either lightning, rain, or thunder, waiting until M. de Laubordemont and the other judges should come out. At length the door opened, and the king's commissioner appeared; upon which sister Jeanne des Anges, kneeling down before him, declared that she had not power to play the horrible part which had been taught her any longer, and that before God and man, she declared Urban Grandier innocent, saying, that all the hatred which she and her companions felt for him, arose from carnal desires, with which his beauty had inspired them, which desires had been heightened by the seclusion of the cloister. M. de Laubordemont threatened her with all his rage, but she answered, weeping bitterly, that the fault of which she had been guilty, was the only thing she feared, adding that, although the Lord was merciful, she knew that her crime was too great ever to be pardoned. Then M. de Laubordemont exclaimed that it was the devil within her who was speaking thus; but she answered that she had never been possessed of any demon, excepting the demon of revenge, and that it was no magical compact but her own evil thoughts, which had introduced that into her body.

So saying she slowly retired, still weeping, and going into the garden, she fastened the rope which was round her neck to the branch of a tree, and hung herself; but some nuns who had followed her, running up in time, succeeded in saving her before life was extinct.

Upon the same day orders were given for her, and sister Claire de sarily to be kept in the strictest seclusion: her relationship with M. de Laubardemont, not being deemed sufficient, considering the importance of her fault, to soften the rigour of her punishment.

The exorcisms were now, by necessity, at an end, as the example of the superior and sister Claire, was imitated by all the other nuns; but was not Urban Grandier clearly and duly convicted? It was declared that the proof being sufficient, the judges would now resume the affair, and proceed to give the sentence.

These irregular and violent proceedings, the denials of justice, and the refusal to listen to the evidence for the defence, convinced Grandier that his total ruin was resolved upon, the more so as things were now so far advanced, that he must either be punished as a sorcerer and a magician, or else a royal commissioner and a bishop, a whole convent of nuns, several monks belonging to several orders, judges of quality, and laymen of name and birth, must be liable to the penalties assigned to calumniators; but this conviction strenghtened his resolution without weakening his courage; and knowing that it was his duty both as a man and a christian, to defend his life and honour until the last, he published a *factum*, entitled: *Fins en conclusions absolutoires*, which he laid before his judges. It was a well drawn up and impartial summary of the whole affair, which might have been written by an indifferent person.

This plea, full of dignity as it was, had no influence upon the commissioners, who, upon the morning of the 11th of August, issued the following sentence from the Carmelite convent, their place of assembly:—

"We declare the said Urban Grandier duly tried and convicted of the crime of magic, of injuries and possessions practised by him upon the persons of several Ursuline nuns of this town of Loudun, as well as upon other seculars; and taking that, together with other causes and crimes resulting from them, we condemn the said Grandier to make honourable amends, with bare head, a rope round his neck, and with a burning torch of two pounds' weight in his hand, before the principal door of the church of St. Pierre du Marché, and before that of the Ursulines of the town, and there, upon his knees, to ask pardon of God, the king, and justice; and this being done, to be taken to the public place of St. Croix, and bound to a stake upon a scaffold, which shall be erected upon the said place, and there to be burnt alive, together with the compacts and magical characters used by him, as well as the manuscript book composed by him against the celibacy of priests, and his ashes scattered to the wind. We declare all and every of his goods and chattels confiscated to the king, deducting the sum of 150 livres to be used in the purchase of a copper plate, upon which the present sentence shall be engraved and exposed in a prominent part of the said church, and we further ordain that previous to carrying this sentence into execution, the said Grandier shall be put to the ordinary and extraordinary torture in order to discover his accomplices.

"Pronounced at Loudun to the said Grandier on the 18th of August, 1634."

Upon the morning of the day when this sentence was passed, M. de Laubardemont sent the surgeon François Fourneau [illegible] although he was willing to go [illegible] Grandier's [illegible] Fourneau. Upon entering he went [illegible] saying, "What would you with me, infamous butcher? are you come to kill me? you know what cruelties you have exercised upon my body? Well, then, continue, I am ready to die." He then entered and perceived that these words were addressed to the surgeon, Mannouri.

One of the guards of the grand prévôt whom M. de Laubordemont summoned, then ordered the new comer to shave Grandier, and to remove all the hair from his head, face, and body. This was a formality used in magical affairs, so that the devil might have no place in which to take refuge; for it was thought that one single hair left upon his body was sufficient to make the patient insensible to the pains of torture. Urban understood from this that the sentence was given, and that he was condemned.

Fourneau, after saluting Grandier, informed him of what he was commanded to do; upon which a judge remarked, that it was not sufficient to shave the body of the condemned man, but that his nails must also be cut off, in case the devil should take refuge under them. Grandier looked at this man with an expression of the most touching charity, and held out his hands to Fourneau, but he gently rejected them, saying, that he would do nothing in it, were it not for the order of the cardinal duke, and he begged him at the same time to forgive him if he laid hands upon him to shave him. At these words, Grandier, who had been so long accustomed to the inhumanity of all around him, turned to the surgeon with tears in his eyes, saying, "You are, then, the only one that pities me?"

"Oh! sir," replied Fourneau, "you do not see every one."

The surgeon then shaved his whole body, but only found, as we said before, two marks, the one on the back, and the other on the thigh; these two marks were very plain, for they were still inflamed with the wounds which Mannouri had made. When this operation was finished, they gave Grandier, not his own clothes, but worse garments, which had doubtless belonged to some other condemned person.

Although his sentence had been given at the Carmelite convent, he was conducted in a close carriage to the town-hall, where several ladies, amongst whom was Laubordemont's wife, curious to hear the reading of the sentence, were seated with the judges; Laubordemont himself was in the *greffier's* usual place, the *greffier* was standing before him, and all the avenues were filled by soldiers and guards. Previous to the prisoner's being brought in, he was exorcised by Father Lactance and another Franciscan monk, so that the devils might leave him. They then entered the hall and exorcised the air, the earth, and the other elements, after which Grandier was led in.

He was retained for some time at the bottom of the hall, in order to allow time for the exorcisms to take effect; he was then taken into the bar and commanded to kneel down. Grandier obeyed, but without removing either his hat or his cap, his hands being bound behind his back; the *greffier*, however, snatched the one, and the exempt the other, and threw them at Laubordemont's feet. Then the *greffier* observing that his eyes remained fixed upon Laubordemont, as if waiting for him to commence the proceedings, said to him, "Turn, wretch, and adore the crucifix which is upon the judge's seat."

Grandier immediately turned, without a murmur, and with great humility, and raising his eyes to heaven, he remained nearly ten minutes in mental devotion: when this prayer was concluded, he resumed his former posture.

The *greffier* then began to read the sentence in a trembling voice, while Grandier, on the contrary, listened with great firmness and tranquillity, although the sentence was the most terrible that could have been given against him, condemning the prisoner to die that same day, after being put to the torture.

When the *greffier* had concluded, "My lords," said Grandier, in his usual voice, "I swear by God the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, and the Virgin, my only hope, that I have never been a magician, that I have never committed sacrilege, that I know no other magic than that of the holy scriptures, which I have always preached, and that I have never had any other belief than that of our holy apostolical and Roman Catholic church. I renounce the devil and all his deceits; I avow my Saviour, and I pray him, that the blood of his cross will render me meritorious in his sight, and you, my lords, I beseech you to moderate the severity of my punishment, and not to plunge my soul into despair!"

At these words, hoping to draw something from the condemned man's fear of pain, Laubordemont ordered the women and the curious who were in the palace to withdraw, leaving him alone with M. Houmain, the criminal lieutenant of Orleans, and the Franciscan monks. Then addressing Grandier in a severe voice, he said to him, that there was but one way of having his sentence mitigated, and this was by declaring his accomplices and signing his declaration. To which Grandier replied, that having committed no crime, he could have no accomplices. Then Laubordemont ordered the malefactor to be taken into the torture room, which adjoined the judgment hall. This order was immediately executed.

The torture then in use at Loudun, was that of the half boots, one of the most painful of all. It was effected by putting the two legs of the malefactor between four plates which were bound with ropes, and by striking wedges between the two middle plates, with blows of a mallet; the ordinary torture was that of four, and the extraordinary of eight wedges: this last being seldom given to any persons excepting those condemned to die, as it was almost impossible to survive it, the malefactor, when taken from the executioner's hands, having the bones of his legs ground to powder. M. de Laubordement, by his own authority, although never before heard of, added two extra wedges to the extraordinary torture; so that instead of eight, Grandier had to undergo ten.

This was not all: the royal commissioner and the Franciscan monks took upon themselves the duties of the executioners.

Laubordemont bound Grandier in the usual manner, fastened his legs to the four plates, and when this was done, sent away the executioner and his servants; but he was now informed by the keeper of the instruments, that the wedges were too small: there were unfortunately no others, and in spite of the commissioner's threats to the keeper, no larger ones could be procured; they inquired how long it would take to make another set: the keeper demanded two hours. This was considered too long, and they were forced to content themselves with those which they had.

Then commenced the punishment: Father Lactance, after exorcising the instruments of torture, took the mallet and struck the first wedge; but he could draw no complaint from Grandier, who, during this time, recited a prayer in a low voice; he took a second, and at this time the prisoner, bold as he was, could not prevent himself from interrupting his prayer by two groans. At each time Father Lactance struck harder, crying, "Dicas, dicas!"—"confess, confess!" which word he repeated with such fury during the whole time of the torture, that he afterwards took the name, and was always called by the people, Father *Dicas*.

After the second wedge had been struck, Laubordemont presented Grandier with a manuscript book, written against the celibacy of priests, and inquired if he recognised what was written in it as his handwriting? Grandier answered in the affirmative. When questioned what was his object in writing this book, he answered that it was to restore peace to a poor girl whom he had loved, which was proved by these two lines written at the end:

"Si ton gentil esprit prend bien cette science,
Tu mettras en repos ta bonne conscience."

M. de Laubordement next asked what was this girl's name; but Grandier answered that that name would never escape from his lips, none knew it saving himself and God. Upon which M. de Laubordemont ordered Father Lactance to strike in the third wedge.

While Lactance was obeying this order, accompanying every blow with the word "*dicas*," Grandier cried, "Oh, my God! you kill me, although I am neither a magician, nor have I committed sacrilege."

At the fourth wedge Grandier fainted, saying, "Oh, Father Lactance! is this charity?" Insensible as he was, Father Lactance did not cease striking; so that after having lost his senses by pain, pain restored them.

Laubordemont took advantage of this moment to urge him to confess his crimes; but Grandier said to him, "I have committed faults, sir, but not crimes. As a man I have abused the desires of the flesh; but I have confessed and repented of these things, and believe that I have received pardon by my prayers; and if not, I trust that God, in consideration of what I am now suffering, will grant me his forgiveness!"

At the insertion of the fifth wedge, Grandier again became insensible; water was then thrown upon his face to restore him; then turning to M. de Laubordemont:

"In mercy," said he, "let me die at once, sir: alas! I am a man, and cannot promise, if you continue to torture me thus, that I can much longer sustain my fortitude."

"Well then, sign this, and the torture shall be stopt," said the royal commissioner, presenting him a paper.

"My father," said Grandier, turning to the Franciscan; "do you think, upon your conscience, that a man is allowed to confess a fault which he has not committed, in order to free himself from bodily pain."

"No," replied the monk, "for if he dies after a falsehood, he dies in mortal sin."

"Go on then," said Grandier; "for after suffering so much in the body, I should wish to save my soul." Upon which, Lactance inserted the sixth wedge, and Grandier again fainted.

When he came to himself, Laubordemont summoned him to confess that he had carnally known Elizabeth Blanchard, as she had accused him of having done; but Grandier answered, that not only had he never had any intimate acquaintance with her, but, that until the day, when he had been confronted with her, he had never before seen her.

At the seventh wedge, Grandier's legs burst, and the blood spirted into Father Lactance's face, who [illegible] with the sleeve of his robe;

Grandier then cried : " Oh, Lord ! my God ! have pity upon me, I die." And he fainted a third time. Father Lactance took advantage of the interval, to sit down and rest himself.

Upon coming to himself again, Grandier began a prayer, so beautiful and touching, that the *lieutenant du prévôt*, took it down, which being perceived by Laubordemont, he forbade him to show it to any one.

At the eighth wedge, the marrow of the bones came out of the wounds: it was impossible to continue any longer, as the legs were as flat as the plates which pressed upon them : besides which, Father Lactance was exhausted with fatigue.

Grandier was then unfastened, and laid upon the ground; his eyes sparkling with fever and agony, when he composed a second prayer, full of enthusiasm and faith ; but at the end of this prayer, his strength again failed him, and he fainted a fourth time : the *lieutenant du prévôt* poured a little wine into his mouth, which restored him ; he then made a declaration of contrition, renouncing Satan with all his deceits and works, and giving his soul to God.

Four men now entered and unbound his legs, which, when no longer supported by the plates, fell broken under him, the flesh being kept together by the nerves alone ; he was then carried into the chamber of council and laid upon some straw before the fire.

Seated by the fire was an Augustine monk, whom Urban requested for a confessor ; Laubordement refused him, and again presented him the paper to sign, but Grandier answered, " If I would not sign it to escape your tortures, still less will I sign it when nothing remains for you to do but to kill me."

" Doubtless," answered Laubordemont ; " but your death will be according as we choose to make it, quick or slow, easy or cruel—sign this paper."

Grandier pushed it gently aside with his hand, making a sign of refusal with his head ; Laubordemont then returned in a great passion, and gave the orders to bring in Father Tranquille and Father Claude, the confessors who had been chosen for Urban : they approached him to do the duty, but Grandier, recognising two of his executioners, answered, that four days ago he had been confessed by father Grillau, and that he was not aware of having committed any sin since that time to compromise his soul's safety ; the two priests exclaimed against the heretic's impiety, but nothing could induce him to confess himself to them.

After an interval of four hours, the executioner's assistants came in search of him, placed him upon a handbarrow, and were carrying him away, when they were met by the lieutenant criminal of Orleans, who again exhorted him to confess his crimes ; but Grandier answered, " Alas ! sir, I have already done so, and have nothing upon my conscience."

" Do you not wish, then," asked this judge, " that I should pray to God for you ?"

" You would oblige me much," said Urban, " and I even beg you to do so."

A torch was then put into his hand, which he kissed as he was leaving the palace, looking around him, modestly but firmly, and begging those whom he knew wished him well, to pray to God for him.

His sentence was read to him upon the threshold of the door, he was then placed in a small cart, and dragged to the church of St. Pierre, in the market-place; when there, Laubordemont ordered him to get o and he was pushed out of the cart; but as his legs were broken, he f upon his knees; remaining thus with his face to the ground, patient waiting until some one should raise him; he was lifted up and taken int the courtyard, where his sentence was again read to him, and the *greffi* was about to finish, when father Grillau, his confessor, who had been separated from him for the last four days, pushed his way through the crowc and throwing himself into his arms, embraced him without being able t speak a word for weeping; but collecting himself in a short time: "Sir," said he, "remember that our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to God hi father, after torture and the cross; do not lose courage; I bring yo your mother's blessing, she and I will pray to God to be merciful to you and to receive you into his paradise."

These words seemed to instil new strength into Grandier's mind, he lifted his head, bent by pain, and with his eyes raised to heaven, made a short prayer; then turning to his worthy confessor:

"Be a son to my mother," said he; "pray to God for me; recommend my soul to the prayers of all good monks. I go with the consolation of dying innocent, and I trust God will be merciful to me, and receive me into Paradise."

"Have you no other charge to give me?" continued Father Grillau.

"Alas!" answered Grandier, "I am condemned to a very cruel death, my father, ask the executioner if there is no way of softening it."

"I go," said the Franciscan, and giving him absolution in *articulo mortis*, he left the court; and drawing the executioner aside, he asked him if he could not spare the malefactor his terrible agony by means of a brimstone shirt. The executioner answered, that as Grandier was sentenced to be burnt alive, he dared not employ so plain a means of shortening his pain; but that he would engage, for the sum of thirty crowns, to strangle him, immediately upon his setting fire to the pile. Father Grillau paid him the money, and the executioner prepared his rope. The Franciscan waited for Grandier in the passage, and while embracing him for the last time, whispered to him the arrangement which he had made with the executioner. Grandier turned towards him, and said, with a voice full of gratitude, "Thanks, my brother, thanks."

At this moment the archers having driven father Grillau away with blows from their halberds, the procession set out in order to go through the same ceremony before the church of the Ursulines, and from thence to the place of St. Croix; upon the road, Urban met and recognised Moussant and his wife, and turning towards them:

"I die your servant," said he, "and if perhaps some offensive expression has passed my lips concerning you, I beg you to forgive me."

When they had reached the place of execution, the lieutenant du prévôt advanced towards Grandier and asked his pardon.

"You have done nothing to require it," answered he; "you have but done the duty which you were compelled to do."

The executioner now approached Grandier, and with the assistance of his two servants, had him carried to the pile, where, not being able to support himself, he was fastened to the stake by a circle of iron passed round the middle of his body. At this moment a flock of pigeons, appearing to descend from heaven, began to fly round and round the place of execution, without showing any fear of the immense crowd which had assembled, and one of them, as white as snow, perched upon the top of the stake to which Grandier was chained. The believers in the possession cried out that this was a troop of devils come in search of their master; but many said that devils never took such a shape, and argued that these pigeons had come, instead of men, to bear witness of the prisoner's innocence.

When Grandier was fastened to the stake, and the executioner had passed the rope round his neck with which he was about to strangle him, the fathers exorcised the earth, the air, and the wood, and then asked the condemned man if he would not confess his crimes publicly, but Urban answered that he had nothing more to say, and that he hoped, thanks to the martyrdom which they had given him, to be upon that same day with God.

The greffier then read his sentence for the fourth time, and enquired if he still persisted in what he had said in the torture chamber.

"Certainly, I persist," answered Urban, "for what I said was the truth."

The greffier then retired, informing the prisoner that if he had any thing to say to the people, he was allowed to speak.

But this was not the intention of the exorcists: they knew Grandier's eloquence and courage, and a firm and bold denial at the moment of death might hurt their interest. Accordingly, the moment that Grandier opened his mouth to speak, they threw so much holy water in his face that it took away his breath; however, after a short time, he again began to speak, when one of the monks kissed him on the mouth to stifle his words. Grandier saw the intention, and said, loud enough for those around the stake to hear him: "That was the kiss of a Judas."

At these words the rage of the monks became so great, that one of them struck him three times on the face with a crucifix, appearing to those at a distance, as if he was offering it for him to kiss, although the blood gushed from his nose and one of his lips at the third blow. The exorcists now returned to the charge, and again asked him if he had nothing to confess. "I have said all, my fathers, I have said all," cried Grandier; "I trust in God and in his mercy."

At this refusal the rage of the exorcists was at its height, and Father Lactance, taking a torch made of straw steeped in a bucket of rosin, which was lying near the stake; "Wretch," said he, addressing Grandier, and burning him on the face as he spoke; "will you not confess your crimes and renounce the devil?"

"I have nothing to do with the devil," answered Grandier, putting aside the torch with his hands. "I have renounced the devil, and I do renounce him with all his works, and I pray to God to be merciful unto me."

Upon this, Father Lactance, without waiting the order of the lieutenant du prévôt, upset the bucket of rosin upon a corner of the pile, and set it on fire, which Grandier seeing, he called the executioner to his aid. The executioner immediately ran to strangle him; but as he could not succeed in pulling the rope tight, and as the fire was gaining ground: "Ah! my brother," said Urban, "was it this that you promised?"

"It is not my fault," answered the executioner; "the fathers have made knots in the rope, and I cannot pull it."

"Oh, Father Lactance, Father Lactance!" cried Grandier, "where is your charity?"

Then, as the fire spread, and the executioner, already almost in the flames, was about to spring from the pile: "Listen," said he, stretching out his hand, "there is a God in heaven, a God who will judge between you and me: Father Lactance, I summon you to appear before him in thirty days."

Then, in the midst of the flame and smoke, he was dimly seen endeavouring to strangle himself; but he desisted almost immediately, either seeing that it was impossible, or perhaps thinking that he was not even then allowed to destroy himself, then joining his hands, he said in a loud voice; "*Deus meus, ad te vigilio, miserere meî.*"

But a capuchin, fearing that he would have time to say something more, approached the pile by the side which was not yet burning, and dashed all the remaining holy water in his face.

This water raised such a smoke, that Grandier disappeared for a moment from the spectators' eyes: when it cleared away, the fire had gained his clothes; but he was still heard praying in the midst of the flames. At last he called Jesus three times, each time in a more feeble voice; and after the last time he uttered a groan, and let his head fall upon his breast.

At this moment, the pigeons who were still lingering round the stake, flew away and seemed to disappear in the clouds.

Urban Grandier was dead.

* * *

As, in this story, the crime was not committed by the accused, but by the judges and the executioners; our readers will, we are sure, be curious to know what became of them.

Father Lactance died on the 18th of September, exactly one month after Grandier, in such horrible agony, that the Franciscans said that it was Satan's revenge; while many others, when recalling Grandier's case, attributed his death to God's justice. Many strange circumstances preceded it, and contributed to spread about this last opinion. We will cite one, of which the author of the History of the devils of Loudun, guarantees the authenticity.

Some days after Grandier's execution, Father Lactance was attacked by the illness of which he died, and feeling that it had a supernatural reason, resolved to make a pilgrimage to Notre Dame des Andilliers de Saumur, which was believed to be miraculous, and in which every one in the country put great faith. To make this journey he had a place in the Sieur de Canaye's coach, who was going with a party of pleasure hunters to his estate of Grand-Fonds, and who, wishing to amuse themselves with Father Lactance's fright, whose head, they said, had been turned by Grandier's last words, had offered him this place. Accordingly, they did not spare any raillery to the worthy monk, when, suddenly, in a wide and splendid road, and without any apparent cause, the carriage turned completely over without injuring any one. This strange accident surprised the travellers, and stopped the sarcasms of the boldest amongst them. Father Lactance, upon his part, seemed melancholy and confused, and upon that evening at supper, when he ate nothing, he kept repeating, "I did wrong to refuse Grandier the confessor that he asked; God will punish me, God will punish me."

They continued their journey on the next day, and the whole of the travellers, astonished at Father Lactance's deplorable condition, had lost all propensity to laugh or rail at him, when, suddenly, in the village of Fernet, in the middle of an excellent road, without meeting with any obstacle, the carriage was overturned a second time in the same way as the first, without any one being hurt. It was, however, evident that the hand of God was upon some one among them, and this one was suspected to be Father Lactance; they all avoided him, and left him to himself, reproaching themselves with having passed two or three days in his company.

The Franciscan continued his journey to Notre Dame des Andilliers, but, notwithstanding its miraculous powers, it could not revoke the sentence which the martyr had pronounced against him; day by day, hour by hour, after Urban Grandier's punishment, Father Lactance wasted and expired in the midst of awful agonies.

Father Tranquille lived for four years after him. The malady of which he died was so strange that the physicians declared that they did not know its nature; and his brethren of the order of St. Francis, fearing that his screams and blasphemies, which were audible in the street, would produce a bad effect upon his memory, spread the report about that the devils which he had expelled from the bodies of the nuns, had entered into his own. Thus he died, aged forty-three years, crying, "Oh! how I suffer! my God! how I suffer! Not all the devils and all the damned together suffer so much as I."

This epitaph which was placed upon his tomb, corroborated his sanctity to some, and his punishment to others, accordingly as the possession was or was not believed.

"Here lies the humble Father Tranquille of Saint Remi, Capuchin priest: the demons not being able to endure his courage as an exorcist, killed him by their vexations, on the last day of May, 1638."

But the surgeon Mannouri's death was still more remarkable. It will be remembered that it was he who tortured Grandier. One evening, about ten o'clock, as he was returning from one of the suburbs of the town from visiting a patient, accompanied by one of his profession, and preceded by his frater, who carried a lantern, and had just arrived about the middle of the town, in a street called the Grand Pavé, between the walls of the garden of the Franciscan monks, he suddenly stopped, and fixing his eyes upon an object, invisible to all the rest, he cried aloud: "Ah, there is Grandier!" And being asked, "Where?" he pointed with his finger to the place where he imagined he saw him, trembling in all his limbs and asked: "What do you want, Grandier? what do you want? Yes—yes, I come." At this moment the vision disappeared, but the blow was struck; the surgeon and the frater took Mannouri home; but neither the lights nor the day could dissipate his terror, he saw Grandier always at the foot of his bed. For eight days this agony lasted in the sight of all the town; at last, upon the 9th, it seemed to the dying man as though the spectre had changed its position, and was slowly moving towards him, for he never ceased crying, "He comes, he comes!" making movements with his hand, as if to stop it; until he expired upon the same evening, with his eyes fixed upon the terrible vision, about the same time as Grandier himself had expired.

Laubardemont still remains to be mentioned: the following account of him is found in M. Patin's letters:

"Upon the 9th of this month, about nine in the evening, a carriage was attacked by robbers; the noise they made brought the peasants out of their houses, as much from curiosity probably, as from charity. Several gun shots were fired upon both sides, one of the robbers was stretched upon the ground, and another arrested. The others fled; the wounded man died the next day without saying any thing, without uttering a complaint, and without declaring who he was: he has, however, at length, been recognised. It is known that he was the son of a *maître des requetes,* named Laubordement, who, in 1634, condemned Urban Grandier, the poor curate of Loudun, to be burnt alive, for having sent the devil into the bodies of the nuns of Loudun, whom they had taught to dance about, so as to persuade fools that they were demoniacs. Does not there seem to be a divine punishment in this unfortunate judge's family, expiating the cruel and pitiless murder of this poor priest whose blood calls out for vengeance."

THE END.

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